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SCOTTISH LITERATURE

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

MARY STUART AS A GIRL

By JANET

From "The True Portraiture of Mary, Queen of Scots," by permission of Messrs Dickinsons

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS: HER LIFE STORY.

By A. H. MILLAR, F.S.A.Scot. . . . Author of "The Castles and Mansions of Ayrshire"; "The History of Rob Roy," etc. etc.

WILLIAM BROWN
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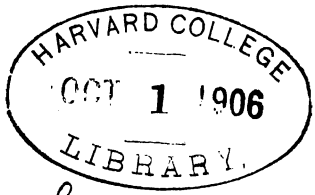


Lieut-G
A Cochrane

PREFACE

THERE is no character in modern history whose romantic adventures have awakened more interest than those of Mary Queen of Scots, and there is a perennial fascination in the story of her life which even at the present day shows no sign of abatement. The peculiar time in which she lived, marking, as it did, an epoch of transition in religious affairs, and the rapid development of the resources of England, the inveterate enemy of her kingdom, made it desirable that the ruler of the country should be firm and bold to withstand southern encroachment, and liberal and politic to soothe theological differences. But any natural determination towards tolerance which Mary's character may have originally possessed was warped and distorted by her early education; and her disposition, once gentle and confiding, may have been changed by her experience of the faithlessness of mankind into that form of stolid distrust which suspects the truest friend and questions the least interested motives.

It is difficult to analyse the character of Mary, not because of its subtlety, but rather because

of that simplicity and trustfulness which—in the early portion of her career at least—led her to perform acts of unpardonable weakness, fraught with disaster both to herself and her subjects. Nor is the difficulty decreased by the fact that the historians of her reign have presented accounts of her deeds so garbled under the influence of party feeling that they have made her life a riddle and her character an enigma. On the one side, the Protestant historians and annalists of her time have vindicated their creed by aspersing the character of the Roman Catholic Queen; while, on the other side, the Romanists have brought wholesale charges against the Reformers who ruled her Councils. No doubt the truth lies between these extremes, and it is not possible to understand the complications in her life story without giving due weight to the influence of the two forms of religion which existed at the time. The faith which upheld Queen Mary through her protracted troubles, and enabled her calmly to endure the ignominious and sanguinary death which she suffered, must have been sincere; and this fact explains some of the dubious points in her history, and accounts for several of the darker deeds associated with her memory. And, on the other hand, it is beyond question that some of the Protestant leaders who surrounded her did little to recommend their creed on the score of morality or sincerity.

Before condemning the Queen it is then needful to appreciate the difficult circumstances in which she was placed. Brought as a ruler to the people from whom she had been absent from childhood, and trained as a Catholic to suspect all Protestants, she soon found that many of the ambitious nobles near the throne desired to use her for the furtherance of their own selfish designs. Her misfortunes were often caused by her own wilfulness; her courage sometimes led her into deeds of daring foolhardiness; but those who condemn her as an inexcusable sinner are as far astray in their estimate as those who deem her a faultless saint. To explain fully the conditions under which her life was passed is not possible within limited space, but an honest attempt will here be made to place the events of her chequered career faithfully before the reader, so that he may draw his own conclusions.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	BIRTH AND LINEAGE	1
II.	THE CORONATION	9
III.	LIFE IN FRANCE.	19
IV.	THE BETROTHAL AND THE BRIDAL	33
V.	QUEEN OF SCOTLAND, ENGLAND, AND FRANCE.	49
VI.	ORPHANED AND WIDOWED	64
VII.	THE RETURN TO SCOTLAND	85
VIII.	THE SECOND BRIDAL	103
IX.	THE TRAGEDY OF RICCIO	122
X.	MURDER OF DARNLEY	139
XI.	DUNBAR AND LOCHLEVEN	159
XII.	LANGSIDE, AND AFTER	180
XIII.	TRIALS AND CAPTIVITY.	195
XIV.	THE EXECUTION.	204
	INDEX	219

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PORTRAIT OF MARY STUART . .	*Frontispiece*	
		PAGE
OLD VIEW OF LINLITHGOW PALACE . .		5
OLD VIEW OF HOLYROOD PALACE . .		89
PORTRAIT OF DARNLEY . . .		105
PORTRAIT OF DAVID RICCIO . . .		113
PORTRAITS OF MARY STUART AND HER SON		145
PORTRAIT OF BOTHWELL . . .		165
AUTOGRAPH OF MARY STUART . .		199

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

CHAPTER I

BIRTH AND LINEAGE

> Now glad at heart, the gossips breathe their prayer
> And, crowding, stop the cradle to admire
> The babe.
>
> ROGERS.

THE Stuart dynasty was the sport of fortune throughout the whole course of its existence. There is no other ruling race of which we have record in history that for so long endured the extremes of success and failure. After a life of turmoil Robert II., the first of the Stuart kings, died, leaving a divided family behind him, the elder son being weak in character, and the younger having an unscrupulous and ambitious spirit which brought trouble upon the race. Robert III., the second of the Stuarts, died of a broken heart, caused by misfortune. James I., after spending most of his life in prison, was slain by the dagger of an assassin. James II. was killed by the bursting of a cannon at the siege of Roxburgh. James III., while resisting the rebellion of his son and successor, fell a

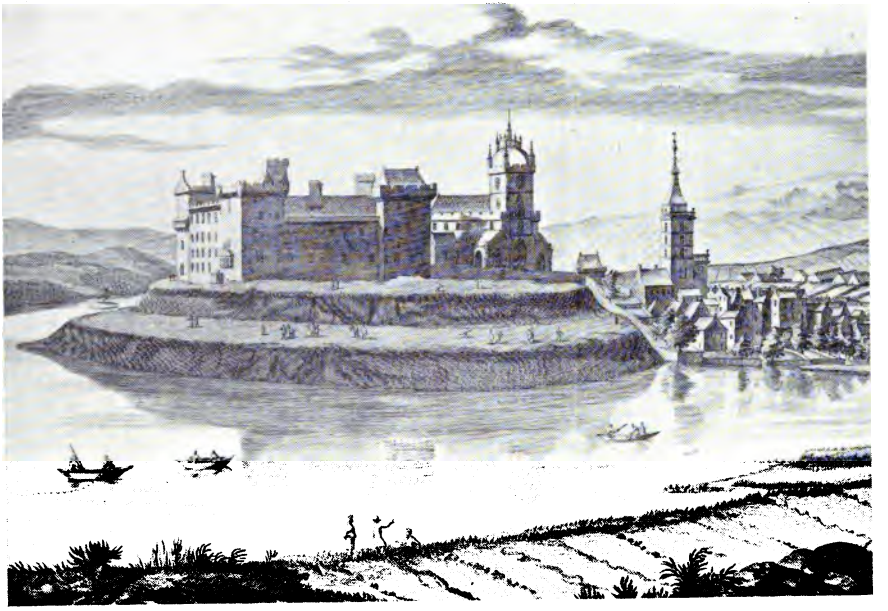
victim to a nameless murderer after his defeat at Sauchie Burn. James IV., the victorious Absalom, died on Flodden Field, whither he had led his army to disaster. James V. died broken-hearted, mourning over the disgrace and repulse of his forces at Solway Moss. His daughter, Mary, expired on the scaffold. James VI., after a stormy reign in Scotland, reached a lofty elevation as King of the United Kingdom, but all his life he was haunted by the dread of assassination. Charles I. expiated his mistaken ideas of rule by an ignominious death. Charles II. spent the greater part of his life in exile. James VII., forsook the throne, which James VIII. never occupied; and Prince Charles Edward, after a brilliant meteoric campaign, degenerated into alcoholic imbecility. His brother the Cardinal Duke of York, voluntarily excluded himself from the throne by becoming a prelate—and thus the sad story of the Stuart dynasty was ended. In the very midst of this long list of hapless sovereigns stands Mary Stuart. Seven kings of the race preceded her, and seven kings by right came after her; but her story was pathetic from its beginning till its close. A fatherless infant, exiled in her youth, she became the Queen of France, only to be soon widowed. Returning to her native land she strove to quell the dissensions that arose, but failed; and, raising an unworthy kinsman to the throne, she was speedily deprived

of him by a violent death. Captured and imprisoned, she was compelled by threats to resign her crown. Her third husband, it is alleged, was one of the worst of the Scottish nobles, and had to fly from the vengeance of his whilom accomplices. Defeated in battle, she sought refuge in England, trusting to the friendship of her near kinswoman, Queen Elizabeth, and the result was her long imprisonment for eighteen years and her shameful death on the scaffold. Not in the whole range of fiction has there been imagined a heroine subject to so many trials and temptations, so many extremes of suffering, as were endured by "the martyred Queen" in her short life of forty-four years. Verily, in her case, truth is stranger than fiction.

Mary's introduction to the world presaged misfortune. Her father, James V., had endured many vicissitudes of fortune. He was but seventeen months old when he succeeded to the throne, through the sudden death of his father on the field of Flodden. He had married Magdalene de Valois, daughter of Francis I. of France, but she died six months afterwards. By his second wife, Mary of Guise, he had two sons and one daughter. The eldest son, James, lived little over a year, and the second son died eight days after his birth. Mary was only eight days old when her father expired, in his thirty-first year, ending a life that had been full of vexation. She was born at Lin-

lithgow Palace on the night between the 7th and the 8th December 1542—there is some doubt as to the exact time. As her own name and that of her mother was Mary her birthday was celebrated on 8th December, the Feast of the Conception of the Virgin, and this has made the date of her birth doubtful by a few hours. The King, her father, under the influence of the headstrong will which would brook no control, had boldly sent an army against the English invaders, only to be repulsed with ignominy. The tidings of the disaster at Solway Moss so overcame the King that on 6th December he took to his bed at Falkland Palace. Two days afterwards news was brought to him of the birth of his daughter, but the intelligence afforded him no pleasure. It was then he uttered the sad prophecy that "the crown cam' wi' a lass, and wad gang wi' a lass," thus linking together Marjorie Bruce and Mary Stuart as the first and the last of the royal race. His death, which has been often wrongly dated, is now proved by documents to have taken place on 14th December 1542. The innocent "lassie-bairn" lying in her cradle was hailed as Queen long ere intelligence had dawned upon her. The power to which she had succeeded was to prove for her a heritage of woe.

The death of the King in the infancy of his daughter naturally threw much of the onus of ruling Scotland upon the Queen-Mother, Mary of



LINLITHGOW PALACE

From Slezer's "Theatrum Scotiae," published in 1693

Guise. Scarcely had the King's demise taken place ere dissension arose among the Scottish nobles as to the custody of the Queen's person. Her mother, impelled alike by instinct and policy, refused to deliver up the babe upon whose life and character the future of Scotland depended, and strenuously insisted upon her maternal rights. The Earl of Arran, whose claim upon the throne gave him some influence in national affairs, sought to gain possession of the infant Queen, even during the period when the mother is the natural guardian of the child. But Mary of Guise, however weak her character may have been in other respects, had the maternal instinct strongly developed. Death had already bereft her of two sons and two husbands, and with this helpless babe she would not part. Had Arran gained possession of the young Queen the course of Scottish history might have been altered; but his schemes, whatever they were, could not be accomplished while Mary of Guise retained the custody of her daughter, though he was chosen Governor on 22nd December.

The infant Queen unconsciously received the homage of the Scottish nobility in the apartment reserved for her at Linlithgow Palace. As the only surviving legitimate offspring of James V. her claim to the throne was unchallengeable; but the illegitimate sons of the King were many and powerful, and it was a wise precaution to obtain

a declaration in her favour from the nobles. There were six sons of the King (all by different mothers) who might be tempted to make a bid for the throne during the Queen's infancy. James Stuart, senior, Commendator of the Abbeys of Kelso and Melrose; James Stuart, secundus, afterwards prominent in history as the Regent Moray; James Stuart, tertius; Robert Stuart, Earl of Orkney; John Stuart, Prior of Coldingham; and Adam Stuart, Prior of the Charter-house, Perth, were all natural sons of James V., and had they combined in favour of one of their number they might have wrested the sceptre from the infant Queen at that unsettled time. But the dissensions among these brethren proved fatally fortunate for her by leaving the power in her right. Much depended upon the faithfulness of the nurse chosen for the child. Janet Sinclair, wife of John Kemp of Haddington, who had ministered to the young princes in their sickness, was selected by the Queen-Mother, and her faithfulness and integrity doubtless prevented the early removal of Queen Mary by nefarious means.

Upon the 8th of January 1542-3 the child was baptised, with all the ceremonies prescribed by the Church to which she belonged, and upon the same day the funeral of her unhappy father took place in the Abbey of Holyrood. Already the two contending religious factions were preparing for a conflict over the Queen's person.

The Catholic party trusted to maintain their hold upon the country by superintending the childhood and education of the child-Queen; while the Protestant nobles hoped that their cause would triumph ere she had reached years of discretion. Ignorant of all that depended upon her existence the infant grew in strength and beauty under the fostering care of Janet Sinclair. There were many pessimists who foretold the woes that would come upon Scotland should the child die in infancy, and the Earl of Arran circulated the rumour that the Queen "was sicklie, and not like to live." It should be borne in mind that Arran, whose grandmother was the Princess Mary, eldest daughter of James II., was accepted as heir-presumptive to the throne, and a great future seemed open to him should fate remove the royal infant. But Mary of Guise, indignant alike as Queen and as mother, resented these slanderous calumnies. She took Sir Ralph Sadleir, the English Ambassador, to the apartments in Linlithgow that he might see the babe for himself, and Sir Ralph's letter to Henry VIII. contained this oft-quoted passage: "I assure your Majesty it is as goodly a child as I have seen of her age, and as like to live, with the blessing of God." This candid avowal might not be altogether pleasing to King Henry. Alike in the interests of England and Protestantism, he had determined to obtain possession of the

northern kingdom, and the nearness of the Scottish Queen to the throne (her grandmother, Margaret Tudor, was the sister of Henry) made it possible that the smaller kingdom would rule over the greater. To avoid this danger Henry sought the Queen in marriage for his son (afterwards Edward VI.) shortly after her birth, hoping thus to be made guardian of her person, and thereby controller of Scotland. But the Scottish nobles resisted this proposal, and the young Queen was retained in her own country despite Henry's machinations. Thus the plan whereby the King of England thought to realise the anticipations of his father, Henry VII., when he married his daughter Margaret to James IV., was abruptly disarranged, though it was not abandoned. Henry VIII. knew enough of human nature to proceed warily. He intimated to the Scottish rulers his desire that the infant Mary should be betrothed to his son Edward, proposing thereafter to assume the Regency, and accomplish the union of the two kingdoms without bloodshed. Despite their dissensions the Scottish nobles combined against the common foe, and Henry's demands were unheeded. Even at this early period in her life the helpless condition of the royal babe evoked the enthusiasm alike of the nobles and the common people, and they rallied to her defence. Already the adventurous life of Queen Mary had begun.

CHAPTER II

THE CORONATION

Darkly though clouds may hang o'er us awhile,
The Crown shall not pass from the Beautiful Isle.
MRS HEMANS.

THE Governor Arran had been chosen Regent, and when the English Ambassador announced that King Henry purposed the invasion of Scotland unless the Queen were handed over to his custody, the demand was met with more spirit than he had expected. The threat forced the Scottish nobles to prepare for an advance across the Border, and it was deemed prudent to appoint eight of their number to reside, in pairs, by rotation, at Linlithgow Palace, to ensure its defence in case of an English raid. The Queen-Mother was not satisfied with the security of the Palace, and she persuaded Lord Lindsay of the Byres, when his turn of custodier arrived, to convey her and her infant to Stirling Castle, where it would be possible to defend the Queen from the plots alike of Henry and of Arran. This plan was successfully carried out, and on 26th July the party was safely lodged in the Castle

of Stirling, the place where Mary's ancestor, James II., had been born, and where her father, James V., had found protection when he threw off the yoke of the Douglas faction. It was plain that Arran, who had signed the treaty fixing the marriage of Queen Mary with Prince Edward of England, had been outwitted by this adroit move, while Henry had been equally checkmated. The star of Cardinal Beaton was again in the ascendant, and to save himself the vacillating Governor was compelled, against his will, to make terms with his rival, Beaton. The reconciliation thus effected was rapidly followed by the coronation. Henry's offers to Arran had been made on the faith of Arran's Protestantism, but when the facile Governor had to choose between the distant Sovereign of England and the ever-present Cardinal he did not long hesitate. What to him were Henry's proposals to make him "King of Scotland beyond the Forth," and to wed his son to the Princess Elizabeth, when the Cardinal stood threateningly beside him? So Arran collapsed, and consented to the coronation, with Beaton as officiating priest, and he thus broke away from the Protestant party both in Scotland and England. Preparations were made for the coronation upon an unusually extensive scale.

Among the strange historic scenes witnessed by Stirling Castle that was not the least memor-

able which was enacted there on Sunday, 9th September 1543. The Chapel Royal, which her great-grandsire, James III., had erected, and which her son, James VI., demolished, was specially decorated for the occasion, under the care of, and with the French taste for display which the Queen-Mother possessed. As the ceremony was to be conducted according to the Roman rites many of the Protestant nobles absented themselves. Nevertheless, there was a brilliant assemblage to witness the solemn coronation of the infant Queen. Prominent among the company was Cardinal Beaton, the astute statesman who could match the best of Henry's counsellors, and who stood unfalteringly by the Queen while life remained to him, supporting the ancient union of Scotland and France against the common enemy, England. The shallow, inconstant Governor Arran stood beside the ambitious Earl of Lennox, two of the nearest blood-relations of Mary, though Lennox was soon to leave the Cardinal's party, and to be linked in a melancholy manner with the later life of the royal babe. The Queen was barely nine months old when this ceremony took place. The crown, whose weight of care had borne her father to an untimely grave, was placed upon her brow. Her little hand was raised to touch the sceptre by which her ancestors had ruled the land. The Scottish nobles knelt before the unconscious infant, and swore to

maintain her right, and the people saluted her with loud acclaim. But it is recorded that in the midst of the ceremony the babe wept. Was it a sad prescience of the horrors which that crown should bring upon her? Was it some mystic influence foretelling that that sceptre should fall from her grasp, and that the power so loudly assigned to her should bring that innocent head one day to the scaffold? Doubtless many of the superstitious Scots present would look with foreboding on the tearful child, and long afterwards would recall this incident when her fate was at the darkest. Years of sorrow must roll over her head ere she should find the fulfilment of the prophecy:

> Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
> And put a barren sceptre in my gripe.

But these dangers were in the distant future; a more immediate peril menaced her. The coronation of Mary and the reconciliation of Arran and Beaton drove Henry VIII. into a furious passion. He foresaw that the Queen-Mother and the French party at the Scottish Court would endeavour to bring about a matrimonial alliance with France. His only hope was to obtain possession of the person of the Queen by violent means. He began by suggesting to the Scottish Protestant nobles that the coronation of the Queen by Roman ritual was a definite

avowal that they were to be ruled by a Roman Catholic queen, who would doubtless wed a Roman Catholic consort, and thus the Scottish Reformation, for which they hoped, would be indefinitely postponed, if not entirely prevented. Henry urged them to lay siege to Stirling Castle, capture the Queen, and disperse the Cardinal's party. This was too vast an enterprise for the faint-hearted Scottish nobles, and they refused. Then Henry proposed that the Earl of Angus, whose disgrace by James V. might make him revengeful towards Mary, should gain access to her presence on some pretext, should seize upon her and carry her off to Tantallon, to be delivered to the Warden of the Marches, and then sent to England. This plot became known to the Queen's guardians, and they redoubled their vigilance, and prevented the lawless abduction of their charge.

Finding his proposals rejected or checkmated, Henry determined upon bolder measures. He despatched an expedition under Hertford in April 1544, with instructions to "put all to fyre and sworde, burne Edinborough town, so rased and defaced when you have sacked and gotten what ye can of it, as there may remayn forever a perpetual memory of the vengeaunce of God lightened upon them for their faulsehode and disloyailtye." Hertford was to sack Holyrood House, destroy the suburbs of Edinburgh, attack

Leith, pass into Fife, and throw down the Cardinal's town of St Andrews, and leave no one alive there, especially such as were friends of the Cardinal. By the following month Hertford was able to inform Henry that he had laid waste the country to within six miles of Stirling, though he found that the Queen had been carried away to Dunkeld. The only excuse which Henry could offer for this act of wanton spoliation was that the Scottish nobles had refused, or delayed, to hand over their crowned Queen to his custody. In the following year (September 1545) Hertford made another incursion over the Borders, but was recalled to the south after he had destroyed many of the fortresses, abbeys, towns, and villages in the Border counties.

The Queen had been brought back to Stirling for security, and her guardians, Montrose, Erskine, and Livingstone, were commanded to remain continually with her in the Castle. At length, on 28th January 1546-7, Henry VIII. died, and the Scottish nation expected that the constant turmoil in which they had been kept for years would now cease. But it was not so. Henry had left injunctions to expedite by any means the projected marriage between Edward and Mary. To further this end Hertford (now the Protector Somerset) invaded Scotland at the head of a powerful army, and routed the Scots completely at the field of Pinkie-cleugh on 10th September 1547. Had he

not been urgently required in England he might have marched as a conqueror through the desolated country. Crushing as was the defeat of the Scots at Pinkie it brought no nearer the desired union of Edward and Mary. They were not to purchase peace with England by delivering up their own Queen, and she was removed for greater security to the Priory of Inchmahome, on the shores of the Lake of Menteith, the Castle of Stirling being left strongly garrisoned for her protection.

A romantic story has arisen regarding Mary's residence at Inchmahome. It is said that here she was attended by the Four Maries, and held a little mimic Court on the Isle of Inch Talla, her chief preceptor being the accomplished John Erskine. Even yet there is shown Queen Mary's Bower as one of her favourite haunts, though unquestionably it is of quite modern date. Then it is declared that she began her studies in the languages, and executed some pieces of tapestry at Inchmahome. But as she was less than five years old when she resided there it is not likely that she could have gone deeply into study of any kind, nor would her needlecraft be of much account, even though she had so skilled a teacher as Lady Fleming. Some difficulty has arisen also as to the length of time that she remained at Inchmahome. While Chalmers asserts that she was there from September till the following February, Mary's contemporary and faithful friend,

Bishop Lesley, declares that she and her mother only stayed at Inchmahome till the English invaders had retired, and then they returned to Stirling, which would limit the time to about three weeks.

It was either while Mary was at Inchmahome or immediately after her return to Stirling that the negotiations for her marriage to the Dauphin of France were completed. The Queen-Mother had long favoured this proposal, and Francis I. —the father of the hapless Queen Magdalene, the first wife of James V.—had been willing in 1543 to have the infant Queen Mary betrothed to his grandson, afterwards Francis II. The old union between Scotland and France had still many attractions, and when it came to be a choice between the prospective kings of England and France the general feeling of the country preferred the latter. There may have been some of the Scots who dreaded the advent of a Roman Catholic king, though at that time the Protestantism of Scotland was not so pronounced as it became a few years after. In any case, the marriage proposals were definitely fixed in the autumn of 1547. Francis I. had been succeeded on the throne of France at the beginning of that year by his son, Henri II., and it was Henri's eldest son, the Dauphin Francis, that was the proposed husband. The Scots appealed to Henri II. to assist them against the English, and they undertook to send

the Queen to France, where she would remain till of a marriageable age. The bargain was completed by the Governor Arran and the French King on the 27th January 1547-8, and the contract was ratified by some of the Scottish lords at Stirling on 8th February, and by others in the following June. A French army of six thousand men was sent to Scotland in June to expel the English troops from Haddington, and when this was effected the proposed marriage was publicly announced, and was approved by the Queen-Dowager, the Governor, and the Estates of Parliament.

It was no easy task to convey the betrothed maiden from Scotland to France, since the English would be on the alert to capture her who was the bride coveted for their King. At length it was decided that Mary should be taken from Stirling to Dunbarton, and that she might hope to escape the vigilance of her enemies if she sailed unexpectedly from the west coast. She was removed to Dunbarton early in the year, and apparently passed about five months there, waiting for the French fleet that was to convey her to the land of her adoption. While here she suffered (apparently for the second time) from smallpox. To evade the English vessels that were on the lookout the French fleet sailed round the north of Scotland, reaching the Clyde early in August 1548. The Queen's retinue con-

sisted of Lord Erskine, Lord Fleming, Lady Fleming, natural daughter of James IV., and the famous "Four Maries," together with "two hundred gentlemen and servants." The party embarked, expecting to proceed at once to France, but the ships were delayed by tempestuous weather. At last they set forth upon what was a doubly dangerous voyage, threatened alike by storms and by the rage of the enemy, and on 13th August the Queen was landed at Roscoff, in Brittany, where, it is said, the ruins of a chapel founded by her may still be seen. It marked the place where she first set foot in the country where she was to experience the few happy years that were to be her lot. She had reached the second epoch in her life. The event was regarded differently by Scotsmen, according to their predilections. Dr D. Hay Fleming brings the opposing views together in one sentence: "According to a contemporary Scottish chronicler she 'past to France to be brocht up under the feir of God'; but according to Knox, 'to the end that in hir youth she should drink of that lycour, that should remane with hir all hir lyfetyme, for a plague to this realme, and for hir finall destructioun.'"

CHAPTER III

LIFE IN FRANCE

Welcome, sweet Maudlin, from the sea,
Where bitter storms and tempests do arise.
The Merchant's Daughter of Bristowe.

It might have seemed needful, as a matter of courtesy, that Henri II. should have met his prospective daughter-in-law soon after she landed in his realm to conduct her in triumph to Paris; but affairs of State, hindered him, and Mary was conducted from Roscoff to Morlaix, the nearest town of importance, where she took up her temporary abode. Her position at this time might well have awakened sympathy. She was barely six years old. Bereft of her father's protecting care almost at her birth, and estranged by fate from the mother to whom she had clung in infancy, she was now in a manner expatriated, and thrust forth in a clandestine fashion from the land over which it was her right to rule, and was on her way to link her life with one whom she had never seen, and of whom the most meagre accounts had reached her. If the evidence of those who saw her at this time be credible she

must have exercised, even at this early period, that personal magnetism which brought friends to her even in her direst straits. Her free and affable manner, inherited from her father and developed by her mother, when combined with the grace of her person and the elegance of her attire, might well charm every beholder. "The young Queen," wrote one who saw her, "was at that time one of the most perfect creatures that the God of Nature ever formed, for that her equal was nowhere to be found, nor had the world another child of her fortune and hope." And as she trod the rudely-paved streets of Morlaix the people might well throng to gaze upon this wondrous child, who had come from her northern kingdom to wed the heir-apparent of the French throne.

The nobility of Brittany, with the Count de Rohan at their head, assembled to do her honour, and she was led, amid a splendid cavalcade, comprised of the foremost knights of the north of France, to the Dominican convent, where apartments had been prepared for her. Such attention naturally elated the little maiden Queen, whose life hitherto had been spent in seclusion. As a devout Catholic she attended the Church of Notre Dame at Morlaix, to take part in the service of thanksgiving for her escape from the dangers of shipwreck and capture. But an untoward incident marred the pleasure of the occasion. As the cavalcade re-

turned from the Church to the convent where she resided the party had to cross one of the drawbridges which had been formerly used in Morlaix when it was a fortified city. The timbers of the bridge were so decayed that they could not support the extra strain put upon them, and when the cortege, consisting of the knights of Brittany and the Queen's Scottish bodyguard, was in the act of crossing the river the rickety erection gave way beneath their tread, and divided the company. The loud crash with which the bridge sank in the river, and the clamour of the horses and riders thus precipitated into the current, threw the procession into disorder and confusion. The Scottish knights, ignorant of the cause of the turmoil, and not unnaturally dreading some act of treachery, drew their swords, and shouting: "Treason! To arms!" they surrounded the litter which bore their Queen, and confronted the French knights, whose attack they expected. The position was a critical one. The young Queen was placed in the centre of the French host, with no defenders save the handful of Scottish soldiers who had accompanied her, and had there been the faintest idea of treachery in the bosoms of the warriors of France they might have given fearful odds against the hardy islanders. But the Count de Rohan, aware of the cause of the tumult, and indignant at even the suspicion of foul play on the part of his countrymen, turned

towards the Scots, from his position close by the Queen's litter, and shouted at the limit of his voice: "Bretons are *never* traitors!" He quieted the fears of the Scottish knights, and reassured them of the safety of their precious charge.

Without further interruption Mary and her escort proceeded from Morlaix to St Germain-en-Laye. Henri II. was not there to receive her, but he had left orders that she should meet with a hearty welcome from the youthful members of the Court. The members of the royal family who were there to do honour to Mary were Francis, the Dauphin, her destined husband, his pale countenance already showing signs of the dread disease to which he fell a victim; his brother Charles, hale, robust, an ardent sportsman and *bon viveur*; and Henri, youngest of the three, whose melancholy fate it was to close the history of the House of Valois. These three princes came in succession to the throne of France, but failed to secure the realm to their dynasty. The little Court at St Germain seemed like a fairy pageant when the young Queen of Scots was there, and no forebodings arose as to the cruel fate which hung over these four personages. The charming power which Mary exercised over all with whom she came into contact had its influence upon Henri II. when he appeared on the scene, and she quickly won him to her side as her ardent champion. The tastes which she

inherited were precisely those which found favour at the Court of France. Music, poetry, and the chase were the dissipations of the time, and Mary, keenly sensitive by heredity to the influences which they exercised alike upon body and spirit, threw herself energetically into the whirl of Court life. It was something quite unusual for the nobles of France to see so young a child as Mary take such delight in the pastimes usually reserved for older people, and this trait in her character awoke their enthusiasm.

There was one enemy that Mary made at the French Court, and that a most dangerous one. Catherine de Medicis, the Queen of France, was one of those women to be dreaded as an asp or utilised as a poison, and the Queen of Scots, her future daughter-in-law, soon fell under Catherine's censure, and became the object of her hatred. For in her early years Mary was credited with that reckless spirit which will sacrifice a friend for a jest, though the bitter experiences of her life soon vanquished her too sprightly wit. She had offended her mother-in-law-elect most grievously by alluding to the commercial origin of the Queen's family. The Medicis, however highly they had risen latterly, were merely (as their name implied) Doctors of Medicine in ancient Florence. And the young Queen of Scots, puffed up, as a girl will be, with pride, forgot that her own name of Stewart betrayed no

very elevated origin, and taunted her mother-in-law with witty jests upon the profession of her forefathers. But Catherine had drawn her first breath in the land which produced the Borgias, and her hatred was implacable. It was not long before she made her evil influence felt in the household of the Scottish Queen. Since the vindictive Queen could not safely attack Mary she sought to wound her feelings through her faithful nurse. Honest Janet Sinclair, who had never been separated from her charge from Mary's earliest years, was reduced to the position of a menial. She was forbidden to enter the presence of her foster-child unless permitted by regal authority, and she was forced to associate with the lower servants, whose company was uncongenial. Her appeals to the Duchess of Guise, Mary's grandmother, were of no avail, and though her application to the Queen-Dowager of Scotland finally set matters right it was at the expense of transforming Catherine into an inveterate enemy.

As Mary was but eight years old she could not have much interest in Court affairs. Her intimacy with her young playmates increased daily, and even in those early days it was noticed that her affections inclined towards the Dauphin, her appointed husband. An important incident took place in September 1550, when the Queen-Mother left Scotland, accompanied by many of the Scottish nobles, to visit her daughter in France.

This event was made the occasion of special display by the French Court. It is stated that "a month before her arrival the flower of the French nobility went to Dieppe to meet her." The King convoyed Mary to Rouen, and there they received the Queen-Mother with every demonstration of joy. Before she left Scotland the Queen-Dowager had determined, with the aid of Henri II., to depose Arran from his high position, and to assume the office of Regent. Arran had been bribed to a reconciliation with Beaton, so that the coronation might take place by the French title of Duke of Chatelherault, but Mary of Guise had not been able to remove him from the control of the country. One part of her mission to France was to consult with Henri as to the best means for effecting this purpose. She remained in France till October 1551, fully a year, and during that time, it is said, the Scottish nobles and their dames were won over to her projects by promises and bribes of various kinds. A contemporary writer records the incident thus:

"The Queen-Dowager having gone to France, taking with her the chief nobility of Scotland, the King bought them completely, so that in France there is neither Scottish duke, nor lord, nor prelate, nor lady, nor dame, but who is munificently bribed by the Most Christian King."

The result of all this venality was not made apparent until after the Queen-Dowager had re-

turned to Scotland. One mysterious incident occurred during her residence in France which cannot be wholly passed over.

In March 1551, while Queen Mary and her mother were making a kind of triumphal progress through France, a plot for poisoning the young Queen was discovered. The details of this despicable scheme are not very clear. It seems that a certain Robert Stuart was apprehended by the French officials on 5th June, and lodged in the Castle of Angers on a charge of having attempted to poison Queen Mary. Suspicion of complicity fell upon the English politicians who did not favour the proposed marriage of Mary and Edward, and though there is nothing directly to connect Stuart with these English plotters it is not unreasonable to attribute this atrocious scheme to them. In those days the "removal" of an undesirable person in political life was an every-day occurrence. According to Bishop Lesley, Robert Stuart was tortured, hanged, and quartered. His name suggests Scottish origin, and it is quite likely that some of the ambitious Scottish nobles had planned this dastardly crime. Fortunately, the plot was discovered in time, and no evil effects ensued. This incident shows most strikingly the political morality of the time, when the murder of an innocent child could be calmly proposed, and could find abettors among the English and Scottish nobility.

Mary of Guise left her daughter and the French Court early in October, and sailed from Rouen, landing at Portsmouth on the 22nd of that month. On her way through England she visited Edward VI., who besought her, it is said, to break off the proposed marriage of Mary with the Dauphin, so that he might make her Queen of England as his father had intended. Her answer is not recorded. She reached Scotland at the end of November, and proceeded with her scheme to supersede Arran. How that was accomplished shall afterwards appear. Ere she left France the Queen-Mother had committed her daughter to the charge of her two uncles, Francis, Duke of Guise, and Charles, Cardinal of Lorraine, expecting the one to superintend her conduct at the Court and the other to watch over her religious education. Under the tutelage of the Cardinal her devotion to Romanism was made sure, while her learning was equal to that of any of the ladies at a Court which was renowned for attachment to literature. She had unquestionably inherited some of the literary ability by which the Stuart kings, from James I., had been distinguished, and though possibly the accounts that survive of her precocity are somewhat exaggerated they are not without foundation. George Conn (Conæus), the Scottish Catholic priest who was the Pope's agent in England in 1636, was not contemporary with Mary; but he had many opportunities of obtaining information

regarding her education in France, and in his "*Vita Mariæ Stuartæ, Scotiæ Reginæ*," published at Rome in 1624, he gives some interesting particulars regarding her studies. He wrote thus:

"She devoted great attention to acquiring some of the best languages of Europe, and such was the sweetness of her French that she was considered eloquent in it in the judgment of the most learned. Nor did she neglect Spanish or Italian, which she employed more for use than for show or lively talk. She understood Latin better than she could speak it. As for the graces of poetry, she had more from nature than art. She formed her letters well, and, what is rare in a woman, quickly. In the excellence of her singing she profited greatly by a certain natural—not acquired—modulation of her voice. She played well on the cittern, the harp, and the harpsichord, as they call it. She danced excellently to music on account of her wonderful agility of body, but yet gracefully and becomingly, for by quiet and gentle motion of her limbs she could express any harmony of strings. She learned to mount and to control her steed, as far as it was necessary for travelling or hunting, in which she delighted, often saying that further care for that exercise pertained to men, not to women." Dr D. Hay Fleming, who quotes this passage as given by Dr Samuel Jebb, takes a moderate view of Mary's capacity. He writes: "Mary's education was not neglected in France.

After making due allowance for the flattery and exaggeration likely to be evoked in such a case, it is evident enough that she neither lacked brains nor assiduity. While her linguistic attainments were above the average; she apparently excelled in music, in needlework, in dancing, and in horsemanship."

While the Cardinal directed Mary's literary studies, or at least took some oversight of them, the Duke of Guise was her tutor in the sports and outdoor pastimes in which she engaged. At his home at Meudon she was taught by the Duke "the noble sport of venerie," and found relaxation from the confinement of the study and the formality of Court life in the chase. And doubtless the martial stories of the rugged warrior appealed to the latent chivalry which she had also inherited from her kingly ancestors. Thus, under the separate influence of Letters and Arms, her curiously complex character was developed, and this dual training was made evident in her later life. Remembrance of this unusual course of education may serve to explain some of the enigmas in her conduct. It is strange to read the separate certificates of character which were given to the Queen-Mother regarding her daughter, and to the Queen about herself. The Cardinal wrote thus: "Your daughter improves and increases every day in stature, goodness, beauty, wisdom, and worth. She is so perfect and accomplished in

all things honourable and virtuous that the like of her is not to be seen in the realm, whether noble damsel, maiden of low degree, or in middle station. The King has taken such a liking for her that he spends much of his time in chatting with her, sometimes by the hour together, and she knows as well how to entertain him with pleasant and sensible subjects of conversation as if she were a woman of five and twenty." The soldier-Duke is reported to have said to Mary: "My niece, there is one trait in which, above all others, I recognise my own blood in you—you are as brave as my bravest men-at-arms. If women went into battle now, as they did in ancient times, I think you would know how to die well." Little could the Duke of Guise then imagine that his words were prophetic, and that the young maid whom he addressed was destined to lead in battle, and also to die bravely.

Much has been written about the corruption of the French Court at which Mary's most impressionable years were spent, and even some of her apologists have sought to excuse her vagaries in later life by tracing their origin to her training at what has been described as "one of the most refined, and at the same time one of the most dissipated, Courts in Europe." A capable writer on this subject (Lionel Cust: "The Authentic Portraits of Mary Queen of Scots," 1903) thus alludes to the French episode in Mary's life:

"It is much to be regretted that so little is known of Mary Stuart's life at the Court of Henri II. In the gloomy romance of her life, her girlhood in France is the only bright spot. The Venetian Ambassador, Giovanni Capello, who saw Mary playing with François, spoke of her as *une très jolie fille de douze à treize ans.* As a child her chief playmates were the Dauphin and his sister Elizabeth, the future Queen of Spain. It is usually assumed that the surroundings among which she was brought up were not only gay but corrupt and vicious. But this is open to question, in spite of any view which may be taken of the characters of Henri II. and Catherine de Medicis, or of the brothers in the House of Guise. As a girl Mary was brought a great deal under the influence of Antoinette de Bourbon, Duchesse de Guise, her grandmother, a lady who was stern and decorous even to the verge of Puritanism. Even Catherine de Medicis, ill-omened as her name may seem in history, knew, among the tortuous byways of diplomacy and religious fanaticism how to insist upon a prudery and decorum in external appearance such as was new to a Court trained under the gay and *débonnaire* François I. . . . Mary Stuart's uncles also, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinals of Lorraine and Guise, were men of conspicuous ability, and their names are among the most illustrious in the history of France. Posterity has judged the

French Court too much from the statements of Brantôme, who, writing at the end of a rather embittered life, dipped his pen not only in fulsome flattery but in scurrility and scandal, which can only be compared to that of Suetonius, who in his time did so much to influence the opinion of posterity as to the private character of the Roman Emperors."

Mary Stuart was even more susceptible to her environment than many of the less intellectual women of the period; hence the association with the aged Duchess of Guise must have had a restraining effect upon her. There are some minds so peculiarly constituted that they are ever open, frank, and free with those in whose company they may happen to be; and, by a curious contradiction, the bodily presence of one friend, however unfaithful, seems to remove the counsels of all others to a remote distance. That this was one of the characteristics of Queen Mary's mind will appear in the course of this narrative: even in her early days it was visible. When in daily contact with the Duke of Guise she did not greatly regard the wisdom of his learned brother the Cardinal, but when the latter took charge of her for a short time she scorned the frivolous pursuits of the former. So in after years she was swayed at one time by the Earl of Moray, at another by Darnley or by Bothwell, and from this feminine weakness arose her greatest misfortunes.

CHAPTER IV

THE BETROTHAL AND THE BRIDAL

Oh! will ye hear a mirthful bourd?
Or will ye hear of courtesie?
Or will ye hear how a gallant lord
Was wedded to a gay ladye?

SCOTT.

THE Queen-Mother had returned to Scotland determined to assume full power as Regent. It is said that the Scottish nobles who accompanied her to France were so generously bribed by Henri II. that their support was assured, the intention alike of the King and of the Queen-Mother being to reduce Scotland to the position of an appanage of the French crown. No absolute proof of this extensive bribery has been produced, but its existence is acknowledged by several later Scottish historians. Dr P. Hume Brown ("History of Scotland," vol. ii. p. 37) writes thus:

"Won over by much French gold, these nobles lent her their support in the main object of her visit, which, moreover, was as desirable to Henri II. as to herself and her brothers. From France a deputation was sent to Arran to request him to demit the Regency, and to offer him as compensa-

tion the French duchy [of Chatelherault], which had already been held out to him. . . . The arrangement made with Arran was that Mary of Lorraine should assume the Regency when her daughter reached the age of twelve. Apparently this delay did not meet her wishes, for immediately after her return she brought further pressure to bear upon Arran." It might seem an easy matter to tell when Mary would be twelve years of age; yet this point required the meditation of the Scottish nobles in Council, and also the Parliament of Paris, and ultimately on 12th April 1554, seven months before the true day, the Queen-Mother was proclaimed Regent.

It is not necessary to detail here the important events which happened in Scotland during the Regency of Mary of Lorraine save in so far as these relate to her daughter. Suffice it here to say that during the six years that she retained the position of Regent the religious troubles arose which plunged Scotland into a turbulent condition, and made it wholly unfitted for the sovereignty of a Roman Catholic queen. These matters belong rather to general history than to a biography of Queen Mary. But it may be noted as a personal item that the dutiful letter which Mary addressed to her mother, congratulating her upon the appointment to the Regency, is still extant, and has been reproduced in the "National Manuscripts of Scotland."

The proposed alliance between the Houses of France and Scotland in the persons of the Dauphin and Mary had raised much opposition among the politicians of France. The distracted state of Scotland at the time did not make it a desirable ally, and with Germany in all the ferment of the Reformation on one hand, and Spain, under Philip II., rapidly overstepping France in the Papal councils, Henri II. needed all the support which a powerful alliance would have afforded. But the Cardinal had determined that his niece should be the Bride of France, and the attractiveness of her person and the charm of her manner materially assisted him in his designs. The Dauphin himself was passionately in love with his destined wife, although, had it been otherwise with him, there would have been little heed paid to the state of his affections. The grace and queenly dignity of the young *fiancée* charmed the Court of France, for, unlike the majority of her countrywomen, she could adapt herself to the customs of a Continental Court with ease and address, and she soon became the centre of attraction in the assemblies of Henri II. Even the Queen, the envious Catherine de Medicis, was constrained to acknowledge her power. "Our little Scottish Queenie (*petite Reinette Écossaise*)," she wrote, "has but to smile to turn the heads of all Frenchmen."

Thus by a fortuitous combination of circum-

stances, seldom met with in Court marriages, the demands of State policy and the affections of the young pair most immediately concerned made this union advisable. The necessity for checkmating the mystical designs of Philip of Spain, whose marriage with Mary of England had placed that unhappy country in the power of the Pope, impelled Henri II. to hurry forward the nuptials of his son with Mary of Scotland, since her claim to the united throne of England and Scotland must be the only valid one in the eyes of Rome after the demise, without issue, of the reigning sovereign. And it says not a little for the political foresight of Henri that he saw the union of Great Britain, France, and Ireland so many years before its accomplishment.

Fearing that some disaster might occur to interfere with his scheme Henri wrote to the Estates of Scotland on 30th October 1557, proposing the completion of the treaty of marriage which they had already signed, and suggesting that the public nuptials should take place early in the ensuing year at Paris. The Scottish Parliament, possibly as eager to consummate the union as he was, considered this letter on 14th December, and appointed nine Commissioners to proceed to France, and attend the ceremony as representatives of Scotland. As all these ecclesiastics and noblemen who survived to return took a prominent part in the later events of Mary's reign their

names may here be given. There was James Beaton, Archbishop of Glasgow, a man not unknown in Scottish ecclesiastical history; David Panter, Bishop of Ross, then Secretary of State; and Robert Reid, Bishop of Orkney, President of the Session—these represented the Church. The noblemen were the Earls of Cassillis and Rothes; Lords Fleming and Seton, the parents of two of the Four Maries; and James Stuart, the Queen's illegitimate half-brother, then Prior of St Andrews, and afterwards the Regent Moray; while the burgesses of Scotland were represented by John Erskine of Dun, then Provost of Montrose. The appointment of these nine Commissioners by the Parliament having been confirmed by royal mandate, they set sail for France.

Misfortune overshadowed this expedition. The weather was unpropitious, and when on their outward journey, ere they had left the shores of Scotland, one of the fleet, bearing much of the apparel which was to have graced the ceremony, was hopelessly wrecked. Though the ships succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the English cruisers, and reached the coasts of France, a storm arose which dispersed the squadron, and drove them to seek shelter in different harbours. The vessel in which the Earl of Rothes and the Bishop of Orkney were journeying was totally wrecked off Boulogne, and out of all the gallant company within her at the time only these two Commis-

sioners were saved from death by a passing French fishing-boat. Such a chapter of accidents might well have raised anticipations of misfortune from the projected marriage in an age that was always looking for portents.

The Scottish Commissioners at length arrived at Paris, and proceeded to arrange the conditions of the marriage. It will serve no good purpose to discuss the contradictory statements made as to the nature of these arrangements. The report of the Commissioners seems too favourable to their own country to have been approved by so selfish a politician as Henri II.; whilst the accusation afterwards levelled against the House of Lorraine, that Mary was induced to nullify the settlement by signing a private treaty reserving the claims of France to the Scottish throne, is creditable to neither party. The only authentic account of the settlement, which is to be found in the archives of France, reads extremely well from the Scottish point of view, and France afterwards adhered to it as a binding obligation in circumstances when it might easily have been resisted had there been any doubt of its authority. In money matters the Scotsmen were sufficiently acute, for they arranged that Mary, while Dauphiness, should have a private income from the French exchequer of 30,000 crowns, to be increased to 70,000 crowns in event of her husband ascending the throne of France. She was to be placed in possession

of the lands assigned to her as jointure in case of widowhood; should retain the right of residence out of France after her husband's death; and should be free to marry again, with consent of the Scottish Parliament, without prejudice to her rights of property in these jointure lands. This last provision became latterly the only support which Mary received during her tedious imprisonment in England, when she was powerless to insist upon the terms of what some have considered a doubtful treaty.

It was provided that the eldest son of this marriage should secure the crown of both realms, but in the event of the decease of either the Dauphin or Dauphiness without issue the right to the Scottish throne should revert to the royal line there. Should daughters only be born to them the eldest should become Queen of Scotland, since the Salique law in France precluded a female from supreme authority, and she and every other of her sisters should have a portion from the French exchequer. And thus, so far as the Commissioners were concerned, the marriage preliminaries were completed, and were very favourable to Scotland. The Scottish proposals were signed by Mary on 15th April, and she bound herself, "on her royal word," to maintain the liberties of the kingdom "as they had been kept by their most illustrious kings"; and four days afterwards Henri and Francis

signed documents undertaking to preserve the liberties of Scotland, and not to oppose the succession of the nearest heir in event of Mary's death.

While these settlements were ostensibly favourable to Scotland—and even the provision that the Dauphin should have the title of King of Scotland did not seem offensive to the Commissioners—it is now incontestable that both Mary and Francis signed secret documents which practically nullified the formal open agreements. On 4th April—twenty days before her marriage—Mary signed three documents of the following tenor:—The first provided that, in event of her leaving no issue, the kingdom of Scotland should go, in free gift, to the King of France, together with her claim to the crown of England. By the second deed, with consent of her uncles, the Duke and the Cardinal, she made over to the French King, should she be childless, the kingdom of Scotland, "until he was repaid a million of money, or such other sum as should be found due for the defence of that country." The third document was a protest that whatever assent or consent she had given or might give to the Articles and Instructions sent by the Estates of Scotland, especially to the proposition that certain Scottish nobles should obtain her crown in event of her dying without issue, her disposition of the kingdom of Scotland to the

King of France should be held valid. This paper was signed both by Mary and Francis. Some historians have denied the authenticity of these strange documents, while others have ignored them. There is no reason to doubt their existence, for they have been printed by Labanoff (*Recueil* i. 50-59), and an explanation of their purpose is necessary. Dr D. Hay Fleming, who is not unduly favourable to Mary, comments thus upon them: "The young Queen—only in her sixteenth year—probably signed these deeds without fully realising their import. If so, her heedlessness gives a rude shock to the panegyrics of those apologists who speak of her precocity as phenomenal." ("Mary Queen of Scots," p. 24.) Andrew Lang, following Hay Fleming, writes: "These dealings, due to the scheming of Mary's uncles, the Guises, were merely infamous. How far the young Queen understood, or looked into, the papers which she signed we do not know; she was intelligent enough to understand their purport." ("History of Scotland," ii. 39.) It has not occurred to either of these writers that the documents signed on 4th April, however binding they might be originally, were cancelled by the documents signed on 15th April, precisely as a codicil may cancel the most important clauses in a will. There is no proof that "the Articles and Instructions" taken to France by the Scottish Commissioners were known to Mary when she

signed the three deeds of 4th April; hence the earlier documents, however prospective they might be, had been procured "by fraud or guile," and were not binding. In any case, it is absurd to accuse Mary of duplicity in signing these papers, since it cannot be known whether she at first understood their purport, or whether she did not more fully approve of the Scottish proposals, and deem that her latest signature alone was binding. Such a theory was in later times fatally adopted by some of her descendants, and it explains much of what has been attributed to Machiavellian duplicity.

The youthful lovers, Francis and Mary, undisturbed by those cares for the future which were perplexing their advisers, enjoyed that sweet society which is only reserved for mortals so highly favoured as they were. The love, which had grown with their growth, was as true and steadfast as though it had sprung up between shepherd and shepherdess in the green plains of Arcadia. The "hand-fasting," or betrothal, of the young pair was arranged to take place on Tuesday, 19th April 1558—five days before the espousal—and Paris put on her holiday attire to welcome home the prospective Queen of France. Lutetia, the City of Pleasure, as its ancient name implies, left nothing untried to ensure the success of its merry-making. The craftsmen, then famous throughout Europe for their taste and skill in every

decorative art, were kept busily employed for a long period before the event, and some idea of the grandeur of the display is afforded by contemporary descriptions. The details of some of the ceremonies have been handed down to us.

A gay assemblage met for the betrothal in the Grand Hall of the Ninth Tower of the Louvre. The most exalted personages in the realm were summoned to witness the solemn ceremonial, and amid the gorgeous upholstery of a Court equally influenced by France and Italy the young pair plighted their troth before the noblest in the land. The Cardinal de Lorraine, whose schemes had reached their fruition so far as human eye could see, performed the ceremony of betrothal; and while the Dauphin declared that he chose his consort "of his own free will, and with the full consent of the King and Queen of France," not less clearly did Mary announce her choice of Francis as her husband. From the records of that ceremony it appears that the partners in the dance displayed strange combinations. Henri II. of France chose as his partner the young Queen of Scots — both destined to meet with sudden and violent deaths. Henri of Navarre, afterwards the Protestant champion, danced with Catherine de Medicis, the Queen of France, the persecutor of the Huguenots, and the implacable enemy of her then partner. The Dauphin, with the shade of an early death even then upon his

brow, danced with his aunt, Marguerite of Valois; and the young Duke of Lorraine, the foremost noble in France, led Madame Claude, the daughter of the King, through the mazy dance. Death by accident, by rapid disease, at the hand of the executioner, the assassin, the poisoner, was shortly to overtake many of that jovial party, though the future was benevolently veiled from them.

The bridal took place on the following Sunday, 24th April 1558, amid general rejoicing. It was arranged that the wedding should be in the Church of Notre Dame, at Paris—the same edifice where Mary's father, James V., had wedded his first wife, the hapless Magdalene de Valois, sister of Henri II., on 1st January 1537, when Magdalene was only seventeen years of age. Many of those present at Mary's bridal must have remembered that fateful event, which had taken place twenty-one years before, though this memory did not cloud the joy of the new occasion.

Ever a master of those arts that captivate the populace, Henri II. had made arrangements by which it was possible for the Parisians to witness the procession and the ceremony. Immediately opposite the splendid pile of Notre Dame stood the Palace of the Archbishop, and from the windows of the great hall in that imposing structure the King had caused a substantial footway to be erected about twelve feet above the level of the road, forming a passage right across

the Rue Neuve de Notre Dame to the western doors of the Cathedral. The ingenuity of Charles le Conte had transferred this bare scaffold into a covered colonnade, so disguised with carved Gothic archways, executed in the style of the building, that it seemed like a cloistered walk from the Palace to the altar. The wood-carvers of Alsace and Lorraine had cut the oaken mouldings into so perfect an imitation of the groined and vaulted roof of a Gothic aisle that the illusion might well have deceived a stranger. Close by the doors of the Cathedral the covered way expanded into a magnificent pavilion, open on all sides, the roof being formed of blue silk of Cyprus, bearing the fleur-de-lis of France beside the rampant lion of Scotland. From this point the passage was again continued through the doorway of the Cathedral, and up the nave to the chancel, where it terminated in another splendid pavilion, carpeted with cloth of gold, and with thrones provided for the King and Queen of France.

Mary had lodged during the night in the Archbishop's Palace, accompanied by the Four Maries, her faithful companions, whose devotion to her had become the wonder of the chivalry of France and a theme for the poets. The royal wardrobe was ransacked for wedding garments befitting so great an occasion; and even now the curious may read, in the records of the Hôtel de Ville of Paris, a faithful recital of their grandeur:

"She was dressed in a robe whiter than the lily, but so glorious in its fashions and decorations that it would be difficult, nay impossible, for any pen to do justice to its details. Her regal mantle and train were of a bluish-grey cut velvet, richly embroidered with white silk and pearls. It was of a marvellous length, fully six toises [nearly twelve English yards], covered with precious stones, and was supported by young ladies."

Henri II. had sent a special request to Scotland, asking that the crown might be transmitted to Paris to be used at the bridal in crowning the Dauphin, but the Estates of Parliament refused to allow the ancient emblem of kingly authority to be taken out of the realm. The munificence of Henri, however, provided a crown for the occasion. And though Mary was bereft of the insignia and jewels to which she was entitled by birth, upon her bosom there blazed the historical stone with which Henry VII. of England had dowered her grandmother, Margaret Tudor, when she wedded the unfortunate James IV., and thus gave Mary her claim to the united throne of Great Britain. And so, linking the splendour of former nuptials with the magnificence of her own; and repelling every fear which their less propitious fates might have excited, the young Queen, radiant with youth, health, and beauty, prepared for her bridal.

Now is my love all ready forth to come,
Let all the virgins therefore well awayt;
And ye, fresh boyes, that tend upon her groome,
Prepare yourselves, for he is comming strayt.
Set all your things in seemely good array,
Fit for so joyful day—
The joyfulst day that ever sunne did see.

Rarely had Paris seen a more glorious sight than the procession presented as it passed across the quasi-Gothic cloister on the road to the altar. Foremost came Francis, the bluff Duke of Guise, Mary's antique playmate-uncle. Then followed the goodly band of Scottish minstrels, attached to the Queen's person, whose task it had been to keep alive in her memory the deeds of her famous ancestors. These were succeeded by the members of the French Court, and the highest dignitaries of the Church in France, arrayed as gorgeously as their several positions would allow. The bridegroom was led by the hard-featured King of Navarre, before his two brothers—and thus four future kings of France took part in the pageant. Henri II., smiling and self-complacent, held the right hand of the blushing bride, to whom he was about to assign the highest honour in his kingdom; while her left hand was held by the Cardinal de Lorraine, who witnessed in this ceremony the realisation of his desires. The pavilion was ere long reached, and the royal party was there assembled, for Henri II., willing to do the Parisians a pleasure, had determined

that the nuptials should be celebrated before the people. And here these two young lives were united in the presence of a cloud of witnesses.

The royal procession then moved forward to the Church of Notre Dame, and occupied the second pavilion that had been prepared. The Archbishop of Paris proceeded to celebrate High Mass, and the young pair, kneeling on the same carpet, lifted up their hearts in gratitude for the happiness which had been vouchsafed to them. Service having been concluded, the Duke of Guise marshalled them on the return journey, and by the arrangement of Henri II. the happy pair received the homage of the people. The evening was spent in feasting and revelry such as was rarely witnessed even at the gay Court of France, if one may judge from the glowing description given in the contemporary volume, entitled "*Cérémonies du Mariage de M. le Dauphin avec la Royne d'Ecosses*," which is still in existence. Little could that jovial company foresee the cloud of misfortune, disaster, and death which hung above these royal personages. The festivities were continued at the Palace of Tournelles for three days, and then the happy pair retired to the chateau of Villers-Côterèts.

CHAPTER V

QUEEN OF SCOTLAND, ENGLAND, AND FRANCE

Fear ye the festal hour!
Ay, tremble when the cup of joy o'erflows!
Tame down the swelling heart! The bridal rose
And the rich myrtle's flower
Have veiled the sword! Red wines have sparkled fast
From venom'd goblets, and soft breezes passed
With fatal perfume through the revel's bower.
MRS HEMANS.

WHILE Mary and Francis were at Villers-Côterèts spending their honeymoon the Queen wrote an important letter to the Scottish Parliament which merits some attention. During the whole course of the nuptial negotiations both Cardinal Lorraine and Henri II. had urged upon the Scottish Commissioners the necessity of their conferring the crown-matrimonial upon the Dauphin, but the Commissioners had firmly refused to exceed the powers granted to them in this matter. Without this gift of the crown to his son the scheme of Henri for the seizure of the kingdom would be hopeless, nor could the Cardinal claim the right to interfere greatly with the affairs of Scotland until its ruler was a prince of the reigning house of France. Since their arguments had been of no avail with the Commissioners they persuaded

the young bride to appeal to the Parliament that this honour might be added to the dignities of France. Mary complied, thinking that the request arose entirely from a desire to increase the power of her husband. Having made known her mind to the Commissioners verbally, Mary wrote to the Scottish Parliament, asking consent to the matters she had committed to the Scottish lords. To render them more pliable Henri had showered many gifts and honours upon them; but several of the lords were inflexible, and they at length departed from France without having committed themselves, save to a general support of the proposal.

Fate had decreed that some of them should not live to redeem this pledge. They took ship at Dieppe, but had not proceeded far until stress of weather forced them to return to harbour; and here occurred one of those incidents in the life of Mary which puzzle the historian. Shortly after their second landing some of the Commissioners fell sick, and four of them died within a few hours. The Earl of Rothes and the Bishop of Orkney, who had both been saved from a watery grave when on their first journey to France, had again been rescued from a like catastrophe only that they might be hurried into eternity by a death scarcely less rapid. The honoured Gilbert Kennedy and the faithful Lord Fleming, two of Mary's most trusted servants,

shared a similar fate; and within a few days, of the nine noble lords who had set out for France to maintain the dignity of Scotland, only five were left alive. There are historians who have attributed this disaster to poison administered by the emissaries of the Guise faction; and certainly their removal was peculiarly convenient at the moment for the success of the plots of the King and the Cardinal. It was a strange chance which cut down these four noblemen and spared the crafty and designing James Stuart (afterwards Earl of Moray) that he might plunge his country into all the horrors of a civil war to gratify his inordinate ambition.

The five remaining commissioners set forth for Scotland, and reached that country in safety; and the Parliament which heard their report accepted Francis as King-Consort, and ordered that the crown-matrimonial should be sent to France for his coronation. It appears, however, that this crown was never sent, as those deputed to take it refused the task. The intention of the Guise family was unquestionably to make Scotland an appanage of France, to which the Dauphins would succeed; but many events conspired to frustrate this design. A succession of fatalities that occurred during the first year of Mary's wedded life had the effect of altering the whole current of her existence, and preparing the way for the misfortunes that clouded all her later years.

Meanwhile, ere Mary had spent the first few months of matrimonial happiness, important events were taking place in England. On 17th November 1558 Mary Tudor, after a short period of unhappiness as the wife of Philip II. of Spain, had died of a broken heart, caused by her morose husband's cruel desertion of her. As she left no children, the crown of England, according to the Roman Catholic view, devolved on Mary Stuart. This may be briefly explained.

Henry VII. had a son and daughter: the former ascended the throne as Henry VIII.; while the latter, Margaret, married James IV. of Scotland, and thus became the grandmother of Mary Stuart. Henry VIII. had only one son, who reigned after him as Edward VI., and as he died young, the crown came to Mary Tudor, his eldest sister, the daughter of Henry's first wife, Katherine of Arragon. Prince Arthur, Henry's elder brother, had been formally married to Katherine, though the union was not consummated, and when Henry had grown tired of his wife he made this legal tie of consanguinity a plea for divorce. But the Pope refused to release the King from his marriage vows. Furious at this refusal Henry renounced the Pope, threw off Katherine, became a good Protestant, and married Anne Boleyn. To the Roman Catholic mind this marriage was illegal, and Elizabeth, the daughter of Anne, was illegitimate, and thus debarred from the throne;

and as the race of Henry VIII. had failed in Mary Tudor, the crown reverted to the descendant of his sister Margaret, whose granddaughter, Mary Stuart, then reigned as Queen of Scots.

The Protestant party in England, however, knew that they had little to hope for from a queen whose chief advisers were the leaders in the councils of Rome and they espoused the cause of Elizabeth, and solemnly crowned her Queen of England. But the moment for which Henri of France had waited so long was come, and he received an unexpected ally. Formerly Henri had united with Scotland to checkmate the policy of Philip of Spain. Now the death of his wife, Mary Tudor, and the usurpation of her half-sister, the Princess Elizabeth, had transformed the King of Spain into the friend of France. So far had Philip's new-born affection for Henri carried him that he had actually proposed for the hand of Henri's daughter, Elizabeth, and had been accepted as prospective son-in-law. This alliance boded ill for the peace of England, since the wife of Henri's son—Mary Stuart—and the chosen husband of Henri's daughter were both claimants for the English throne. Philip was willing to forego his claim in favour of a Roman Catholic queen.

The absence of Mary from her own kingdom told seriously against her; for Elizabeth inherited all the craftiness of her grandfather, Henry VII.,

and busily circulated English gold that she might produce Scottish rebellion. The divided state of religious opinion greatly assisted her, and she found many patriots in Scotland who conscientiously believed that the Protestant Queen of England alone would save them from the restoration of Romanism. James Stuart, who then drew the revenues of the Priory of St Andrews though he was a Protestant, probably calculated that if his half-sister Mary were excluded from the throne on religious grounds the choice of the nation would fall upon him despite his illegitimacy. That at least is the most reasonable explanation of his wavering conduct.

Henri II., deeming the time favourable, had determined that Mary's claim to the throne of England should now be publicly made, and he appropriately chose the approaching marriage by proxy of his daughter with Philip, in June 1559, as a most fitting occasion. The magnificence of this festivity was likely to rival that of the Dauphin's, for the marriage of Henri's sister, Marguerite of Valois, with Philibert of Savoy was appointed to take place at the same time, and by these unions Henri hoped to be able to extend his rule over the greater portion of Western Europe. Great Britain, the Netherlands, France, Spain, and Savoy would form an empire worthy of his ambition, and the despot who could command the army of these united nations might

make the civilised world tremble at his nod. To gain this end Henri did not scruple to sacrifice his own daughter. The young Elizabeth, the playmate and beloved fellow-student of Mary, had originally been the destined bride of Don Carlos, Prince of Asturias, son of Philip II., but when the suit of that august monarch to Queen Elizabeth of England was rejected, it was proposed that the father should take the place of the son, and wed the Princess of France, provided the same dowry were given her. And Henri, tired of the protracted war with Spain, and fired with unquenchable ambition, gladly consented to the compromise. And the already failing treasury of the kingdom was again taxed to furnish forth a pageant worthy of so great an event.

At last the great day which was to witness this auspicious union dawned upon the world, and Henri prepared for a glorious display of magnificence. The French people, weary of the wearing warfare which had devastated their borders, joyfully hailed the wedding day as the commencement of a reign of quietude, and bestowed upon the young Princess the flattering title of "the Olive-branch of Peace" (*l'olive de Paix*). This 28th day of June 1559 was a memorable day in the history of France, Spain, England, and Scotland, as we shall shortly see. The Duke of Alva, one of the most elevated of the Spanish nobility, espoused the bride as proxy for his King, Philip II., and

the gay, light-hearted Henri bestowed his daughter upon him in his usual jaunty style, and after the ceremony the festivities began. Lists were set up in the grand square in front of the Palace of Tournelles, which had witnessed the bridal of Mary but a few months before, and a grand tournament was proclaimed in honour of the new Queen of Spain. To grace the occasion a great procession was organised, which passed through the streets of Paris from the Louvre to the lists at Tournelles; and the chivalry of France prepared to do their knightly devoirs whilst love and beauty smiled upon them. Conspicuous in this cavalcade might be seen the chariot of triumph which bore Queen Mary to her position in the bower of fair ladies, and the decorations which were used upon it were worthy of notice. The body of the car was figured with the fleur-de-lis of France, over which was shown the monogram "F. et M.," enclosed in a laurel wreath. At the right-hand front corner stood the shield of Scotland, with the well-known lion rampant; whilst at the other side the escutcheon of England, surmounted by Mary's cypher, was fully displayed. Betwixt these a Latin distich (probably composed by George Buchanan) directed attention to the significance of the heraldry. The original is now unknown, but the translation by a contemporary reads thus:

> The Armes of Marie, Queen Dolphines of France,
> The nobillest Lady in earth for till advance;

Of Scotland Quene, of Ingland also,
Of Irland also, God hath provided so.

Before this car thus gaily decked two heralds, in the full heraldic costumes of England and Scotland, claimed these honours for their young mistress by calling aloud: "Room! room for the Queen of England!" while she bowed to the plaudits of the crowd that hailed her by that title. Few in that assembly thought that the words thus lightly uttered, and the deed thus thoughtlessly done, would awaken the lifelong enmity of Mary's cousin, Elizabeth of England. This was the first public announcement of Mary's pretensions, and the spies of Elizabeth faithfully reported the occurrence to her. Though years of sorrow and suffering intervened, this car, so gaudily adorned, bore Mary, however unconsciously, upon her first stage to the scaffold.

The festival was continued for three days by the chivalry of France, Scotland, and Spain. Chief among the aspirants for fame in the lists was King Henri himself, whose grace and bearing on horseback were equalled by his courage and skill with his weapons. Towards the close of the third day the King was idly prancing on his charger around the lists when his eye lighted on the Count of Montgomerie, a Scottish noble in the train of Queen Mary, whose lance had not yet been shivered in the mimic combat. The temptation to crown his deeds by encountering this last knight

on the field was too much for Henri to resist. Despite the entreaties of his wife and family the impetuous King challenged his adversary. But the day was far spent, and with it the vigour of Henri had fled. His already weak arm was unable to sustain the shock of combat, and Montgomerie was less careful of the King than a French knight would have been, and did not spare him the full force of his weapon. The lance of Montgomerie caught the King's visor so violently that the bars were burst, and the splintering shaft entered his eye. Reeling in his saddle the fainting King confessed himself vanquished, and he was borne hastily from the field. Uncasing his armour the nobles laid him on his couch in the Palace of Tournelles, and from that bed he was fated never more to rise. Ten days afterwards (10th July 1559) he expired, surrounded by his sorrowing relatives. The gigantic schemes which he had planned died with him, and his removal in the heyday of life, and at a critical point in history, brought ruin and desolation upon the family for whom he had toiled and suffered and sinned. Though neither a great prince nor a good man Henri possessed those graces and manners which fitted him to lead a volatile people, and he left no one able to fill his place.

To the young Queen-Dauphiness the death of her father-in-law was fraught with important results. The morning had proclaimed her Queen

of Scotland, England, and Ireland, and the evening found her virtually Queen also of France. Her husband the Dauphin, as eldest son of Henri, was hailed by the title of Francis II., and Mary was at once raised to the throne, which her appearance and manner fitted her to adorn. Her old enemy, Catherine de Medicis, took up the position of Queen-Mother with but a sorry grace, hoping still to rule France indirectly through her children, and consoling herself with the unnatural reflection that her sons were too imbecile to wrest the power out of her hands. Mary had not yet discovered the duplicity of her mother-in-law, for in a letter written to her mother in Scotland at this time she thus referred to Catherine: "I believe that if it were not that the King, her son, is so obedient to her there is nothing that she wishes but to die soon, which would be the greatest misfortune that could happen to this poor country and to us all." Ere many months had rolled away Mary began to see the real character of Catherine, and to find that they were rivals in ruling the invalid King.

Francis had been born at an auspicious time. His father, then Dauphin, had returned from a successful campaign against Charles V. of Spain, and in the moment of victory the heir-presumptive was born. From the first his mother had looked with disfavour upon Francis. He was weakly, and often ailing, and this misfortune, so far from calling

forth maternal tenderness, only created aversion and unnatural hatred in the stony heart of Catherine. Her constant trafficking with the magicians and sorcerers whom she had brought with her from Italy had put her somewhat in their power, and they sought to increase their hold upon her by prophesying evil of her son. The judicial astrologers whom she maintained cast the horoscope of the infant Prince, and terrified her with the result. Sorrow, suffering, and disaster were to be his portion; and Catherine, strong-minded in everything save where superstition dominated over her, accepted their predictions. The very period of his birth, which happened during a total eclipse of the sun on 24th January 1544, was made the occasion of lugubrious vaticinations, and the prophets of evil foretold an unhappy life and a speedy dissolution for the grandson of Francis the Magnificent.

These melancholy predictions were too faithfully fulfilled. A boyhood spent in physical suffering formed but an imperfect education for a prince destined to become the ruler of a great nation. His weakly body precluded him from mingling in the manlier sports of the Court, and his neglected education forebade him to hope for distinction as a statesman. Not until he met Mary Stuart did he escape from the burden of life. Her affection and tender

care ameliorated the sufferings which he endured. The devotion of Mary called forth the chivalry of Francis, and the imperfections of his character were covered by her ready wit and adroitness. But when his father died, and he was suddenly called into power, the energy and mediocre ability of Francis could not supply the demands thus unexpectedly made. The death of his father was announced to him in his sick-chamber, and it became his duty to rise from his bed to assume the difficult task of reigning over France. Naturally, he turned towards the stronger mind of Mary for the guidance and support he required.

The first task of Francis II. was to curb the overweening ambition of his mother, who had hoped to rule France in the name of her son. The influence of Mary over him enabled her to accomplish a kind of feminine revenge in the partial disgrace of her mother-in-law, whose machinations she began to understand. The power of the crown had been handed over by the invalid and uxorious King to the wife in whom he trusted implicitly, and who, again, submitted all things to her two uncles, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine. The folly of Mary in thus transforming so unscrupulous a woman as Catherine into an enemy became lamentably apparent in after years, when the imprisoned Queen of Scots had to sue for assistance from the unforgiving Italian.

The delicate state of Mary's health at the time

of her husband's accession, and the continued debility of the King, caused much anxiety in France, and his two brothers were assiduously courted, even in these early days, as likely occupants of the throne. A temporary residence at Villers-Côterèts, the scene of their honeymoon, served to restore them both to a measure of activity, and they set forth for the ancient city of Rheims, where the coronation was to take place. Francis was crowned within the Cathedral of Rheims on 18th September 1559. The dire omens which had already been so plentifully displayed in his life were increased in number by the error into which he fell at his coronation. Penetrated with sincere grief for the loss of his father he forbade his Court to assume the gay apparel appropriate for such an occasion. To his Queen alone did he permit the display of jewellery or adornment of any description. The Court, robed in dismal black, presented more the appearance of a funeral company met to celebrate the obsequies of the departed monarch than of a joyful assembly convened to welcome the new ruler of France. The black eclipse under which Francis had entered life found its antitype in the sombre shadow thus thrown across his first assumption of power and dignity. In the ceremony of the coronation Mary took no active part, since her own position by birth, as a reigning sovereign, was higher than

that to which a Queen-Consort would be entitled.

After the coronation the King and Queen made a royal progress through various parts of the kingdom. Both were in indifferent health, and while it was currently reported that Francis was the victim of an incurable malady it was also stated that the Queen could not long survive him. It is certain that before this time she had twice suffered from smallpox — a disease then widely prevalent even in the highest ranks because of the neglect of sanitation—and shortly after the coronation it was said that she was in consumption. So confident were the English statesmen that Mary was doomed to speedy death that they proposed the marriage of Queen Elizabeth and Arran, who was next to the Scottish throne, so that the crowns of the two kingdoms might be united peacefully. But Mary had much to endure ere the end should come. Her husband was now regarded as a hopelessly incurable invalid. His own subjects shunned him when he appeared in public, as though the very sight of him might produce misfortune. The crown had brought nothing to him but sorrow, and but for the faithful ministrations of his loving and beloved wife he would gladly have laid down the life that was a burden to him. Not long was he fated to endure the trial.

CHAPTER VI

ORPHANED AND WIDOWED

Why art thou slow, thou rest of trouble, Death,
To stop a wretch's breath
That calls on thee, and offers her sad heart
A prey unto thy dart?

MASSINGER.

THE year 1560 was a melancholy one for Mary Stuart. In April she learned that her mother was in serious danger from illness, said to be dropsy. At this time the French army which had been sent to the assistance of Mary of Guise was besieged in Leith by the English under the Duke of Norfolk, allied with the rebel Lords of the Congregation, and the Regent had to take refuge in Edinburgh Castle. The appeals made to Francis II. for aid could not speedily be answered, and the Regent was doomed never to see the day when the promises of her son-in-law were to be fulfilled. On 10th May she sought a conference with the rebels "to save Christian blood"; but she could not pardon the alliance of the Scottish leaders with the English, and her efforts were unavailing. At length, after midnight on 10th June, Mary of Guise expired at

Edinburgh Castle, in peculiarly sad circumstances. The crown which she was protecting for her daughter was in imminent danger; that daughter was herself so ill that her death was expected; and Francis was evidently doomed to have but a short career. Nothing could be anticipated but the speedy termination of the direct Stuart line, and the Queen-Regent closed her eyes in death under a cloud of hopeless despair. The unsettled life which she had led, and the harassing cares of the government in so turbulent a kingdom, had at length accomplished her overthrow. Though the fact of her decease was known at Paris on 18th June, Mary Stuart was then in such infirm health that the sad news was not imparted to her for ten days afterwards. She was inconsolable, and "passed from one grief to another" during two days; for, however unworthy her mother may have been of the deep affection lavished upon her, Mary Stuart was a devoted daughter. The death of her mother at this inopportune moment cast upon Mary the burden of two kingdoms racked by internal dissensions, and both writhing in the agonies of a religious war. And, as though her cup of misery was not yet full, the weakly state of her husband's health caused her constant anxiety.

The constitution of Francis, never very robust, had latterly undergone a remarkable change. The thin, lanky boy had grown with unnatural rapidity

into the spare, attenuated, hollow-cheeked young man, in whom, to judge from the descriptions of contemporaries, there lurked the seeds of consumption. Unfitted, himself, to rule, and unable, on one hand, to restrain the ambition of the House of Guise, and, on the other, to counterplot the machinations of his mother, he fell into a state of listless apathy, and succumbed to disease. In November 1560 his malady took the form of a severely painful abscess in the ear, which latterly developed into inflammation of the brain. During all the period of their wedded life Mary had never been separated from him, and now in his deadly sickness she became his most devoted and assiduous attendant. Through many a dreary day and weary night did she watch by that couch which was destined to become his death-bed. The royal pair had been compelled by the pressure of State affairs to remain at Orleans, but at length, in the beginning of December, the alarming condition of Francis made it expedient that he should be taken to Chenonceaux, and preparations were made for an immediate departure. The tapestries were taken from the walls, and the furniture packed for removal. On the eve of the proposed journey the King and Queen attended vesper service at the Chapel of St Croix attired in travelling costume. The exposure to the cold air of the Chapel affected the invalid, who had just risen

from a sick-bed, and he had to be carried back to the empty Palace. A loose mattress was arranged upon the floor, and Mary resumed her duty as a nurse. Her task was not a protracted one. On 5th December, a little before midnight, the King of France expired, stretched on a squalid temporary couch, and with only one true friend —his heart-broken wife—beside him to listen to his last sigh and to close his weary eyes. The astrologers had foretold that he would not exceed eighteen years, and it has been hinted that Catherine, his unscrupulous mother, had hastened her son's death by poison. Proof of this crime is not available, and it is not sufficient to warrant the charge merely to say that the removal of Francis left more power in Catherine's hands. Even less credible is the assertion that Mary had some share in destroying her husband's life, though that charge has been brought against her. Such a deed would have been madness on her part, for it would at once have taken from her the position she occupied as Queen-Regnant of France, and left her only the discordant and rebellious kingdom of Scotland to reign over. That accusation may be dismissed as beyond belief.

The rigid etiquette of the French Court prescribed that the widow of the King should be secluded from public view until her husband's body had been consigned to the tomb; that

she should remain for forty days in the *deuil* chamber, from which the rays of the sun were excluded; and that she should be served by women only. When the body of Francis was laid in state within the Cathedral of Orleans she appeared before the sorrowing people, and then retired with her ladies to "the fellowship of grief." When her eighteenth birthday came round she found herself a childless widow, cut off from communication with the outer world. Her power in France had passed away, for her brother-in-law, Charles IX., was now a king, only ten years old, and his mother, Catherine, kept him entirely under control. Mary's thoughts naturally turned, therefore, towards her northern kingdom, the place of her birth, which was yet to become the scene of deeper woe and distress for her. It is doubtful if she knew the position of affairs in Scotland, or she might not have been in such haste to go thither. The death of Francis, the Catholic King-Consort of Mary, had been hailed with exultation by some of the Protestant leaders. Referring to this event, Knox wrote: "The potent hand of God from above sent unto us a wonderful and most joyful deliverance; for unhappy Francis, husband to our Sovereign, suddenly perisheth of a rotten ear, . . . that deaf ear that never would hear the truth of God." The Huguenots in France were equally elated at the removal of Francis, though they

were to pass through much tribulation ere they attained the freedom they desired. It came to be a question with Mary whether she should remain in France, occupying a lower position than her enemy Catherine, or whether she should return to Scotland, where, she believed, there were still many loyal nobles to support and defend her. She decided for Scotland, and about a month after the death of Francis she wrote thus to Lord Gray:

"Since it hath pleased God to call the King, our lord and dearest husband, to His mercy, we have thought good to make you participant that our intent is to pass shortly in those parts, to live amongst our subjects in all content and amity."

Another circumstance may have helped to hasten Mary's departure from France. Even before the death of Francis the political plotters had been providing a new husband for her. The English spies at the French Court circulated rumours which implied that she was already in pursuit of a fresh alliance even before her husband's death. When allowance is made for the different position of a queen who was a prospective widow from that of a commoner whose second marriage could have no influence upon politics, the notion that Mary was already on the lookout for a successor seems very like a slander upon her. Yet some of the antagonists

of Mary have ventilated that opinion. Dr Hay Fleming writes thus: "A week before Francis died many in Orleans were speculating on Mary's second husband. 'There is plenty of discourse here,' says Throckmorton, 'of the French Queen's second marriage; some talk of the Prince of Spain, some of the Duke of Austrich, others of the Earl of Arran.' Fifteen days after the death of Francis, the Duke of Alva expressed the opinion that the French would seek to have the disposal of her again, and suggested to Chamberlain the course which he thought Elizabeth should pursue. In the Spanish Court at Toledo some believed that the French would, with a dispensation, marry Mary to the new King; others, with one of her uncles, the Prior of St. John; some wished that it might be with the Prince of Spain; while others spoke of the King of Denmark and the new King of Sweden. Some of the Scots were anxious that she should return to her own country, and marry there, or at least with the consent of the Estates; many that, wherever she married, the amity with England should continue." It is quite possible that all this silly gossip was circulating at that time among the back-stairs politicians at the French Court, but it is very unlikely that Mary had anything to do with these rumours. At the moment of her distress the afflicted Queen was more minded to retire to the seclusion of a convent than to enter again

into matrimony, and it is possible that she would have done so had not the remonstrances of the Guise family overborne her desire.

The Court of France, where her enemy, Catherine de Medicis, had regained supreme power, was no longer fitted to be the abode of the widowed Queen, and she made preparations for a speedy departure for her native kingdom of Scotland. Before leaving France, Mary determined to take farewell in person of the relatives with whom she had been so long intimately associated. For this purpose she visited her grandmother, Antoinette de Bourbon, at her Castle of Joinville. The excitement through which she had recently passed was now visibly telling upon her frame, and she fell sick of an ague at Joinville, and was compelled to place herself under the care of the affectionate Dowager-Duchess of Guise. For this reason she was unable to attend the coronation of Charles IX. at Rheims, which took place on 15th May, though she reached that city about ten days afterwards. Here she was waited upon by Throckmorton, the English Ambassador, whose instructions from Elizabeth were to procure from Mary the ratification of the Treaty of Edinburgh. To this demand she refused to give a definite consent, pleading that she could not do so until she had consulted the Scottish nobles, whom she expected shortly to see in Scotland. Had she granted

this ratification she would have legalised all the acts of the insurgent lords, and practically signed away her authority in her own kingdom, as well as her claim to the throne of England. There was something peculiarly despicable in this attempt to take advantage of Mary's misfortunes, and to threaten that she would not be allowed to return to Scotland unless she consented to be thus coerced. No marvel that the spirit of Mary was roused to indignation by this action, and that she determined, at all hazards, to dare the dangers of capture.

There was one important statement which Mary made to Throckmorton at this historic interview on 18th June which has hardly received due weight in estimating her character. She declared that she did not purpose constraining her subjects in the matter of religion, and trusted that Elizabeth would not seek to constrain her. At a later date, in Holyrood, she told Lord James Stuart that she would not interfere with the Protestant form of worship, provided her subjects would accord like freedom to her in the practice of her own religion. It is open for the detractors of Mary to allege that this was merely a Jesuitical subterfuge on her part to obtain favours that might otherwise be withheld; but it seems more natural to suppose that she was possessed of a spirit of broad toleration which anticipated that of later centuries, and saw that

there was as much dangerous bigotry in the one form of religion as in the other. Certainly Elizabeth could not appreciate magnanimity of this kind. Mary sent D'Oysel to the English Court to ask for a passport for herself, providing that if she arrived at any English port she might tarry there to purchase provisions, and, if so disposed, might travel by land to Scotland; and further, a safe-conduct for her to pass through England with her train. Elizabeth's reply was a prompt refusal, unless Mary would ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh, though she professed herself willing, after the ratification, not only to grant the permission asked, but also to arrange a personal interview. With this message D'Oysel returned to Mary, and she regarded it as a plain declaration of war between them.

One must not be unjust to Elizabeth. She knew that her hold upon the English crown was but slight; that all the Roman Catholic Powers, though they had entered into treaties with her, regarded her as illegitimate in the sight of the Papacy; while her own subjects had been Protestant under Henry VIII. and Edward VI., Catholic under Mary Tudor, and in a transition state since she had assumed the crown. Probably Froude's opinion is well founded when he writes: "To have allowed a Catholic princess, a rival claimant of her crown, who, in defiance of promises, was obstinately maintaining her pre-

tensions, to pass three hundred miles through a population the most notoriously Romanist in the realm, and with many of whom the Queen of Scots was already in communication, would have been an act of political suicide." Mary's demands were possibly too exacting, though Elizabeth's conditions were of such a nature that they would have prejudiced her position towards her own subjects.

The intentions of Elizabeth were unmistakable. It was of the utmost importance to her that Mary should be prevented from reaching Scotland, and she resolved that, to accomplish this end, she would not scruple to lay violent hands upon her person. Throckmorton kept Elizabeth informed as to all Mary's affairs, and she knew the day of Mary's intended departure even better than that Queen's own household. Yet, though she was conscious of this close espionage, Mary conducted herself prudently towards Throckmorton. There is a strain of chivalrous dignity in her recorded reply to him which reminds one of some of the earliest Stuart sovereigns:

"If my preparations were not so advanced as they are, peradventure the Queen your Mistress's unkindness might stay my voyage; but now I am determined to adventure the matter, whatsoever come of it. I trust the wind will be so favourable that I shall not come upon the coast of England; and if I do, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, the Queen

your Mistress will have me in her hands to do her will of me; and if she be so hard-hearted as to desire my end, peradventure she may then do her pleasure, and make sacrifice of me—peradventure that casualty might be better for me than to live. In this matter God's will be fulfilled."

Mary was to endure many years of trouble and sorrow, of sickness and imprisonment, ere Elizabeth should "do her will" upon her hapless kinswoman. At that moment, however, she was determined to carry out her purpose of returning to Scotland in defiance of English opposition. She reminded Throckmorton that the rulers acting for Edward VI., Elizabeth's brother, had vainly striven to prevent her voyage as a child from Scotland to France, and she was confident that Elizabeth would not now be permitted to hinder her return to her native kingdom. Fortunately, her resolve met with the approval of Catherine and Charles IX., whatever motives may have actuated them; and Catherine declared, to Throckmorton that they both resented the refusal of Elizabeth to grant a safe-conduct, leading him to understand, that if any ill befell the young Queen, it might form the occasion of war between France and England.

On 25th July Mary took farewell of the King and Court at St Germain-en-Laye—a place afterwards to be associated with the last of the Stuart

kings—though the port of her proposed embarkation was kept a secret. The baggage for the expedition had been sent to Calais, but this was thought to be merely a feint to throw the English off the scent. At Abbeville on 7th and 8th August Mary saw Throckmorton for the last time. Possibly she was still in hopes that Elizabeth might have relented, and that she would not have to fear both the stormy seas that divided her from her native land and the active malignity of her enemies. But apparently Throckmorton had no such gospel to give her. She resolved, therefore, to send Sir James Stuart of Doune, Commendator of St Colme's, and Arthur Erskine, to make a final appeal to Elizabeth. This, again, might be merely an attempt to delude the Queen of England, and put her off her guard. When two keen-witted women like Mary and Elizabeth are opposed to each other one may expect duplicities and subterfuges. Probably it never will be known whether Catherine de Medicis' threat of war or Queen Mary's appeal for kindness had greater influence on Elizabeth. It is certain, however, that St Colme and Erskine returned to Calais with a safe-conduct, only to learn that by that time their Sovereign was far across the sea, and nearing her ancestral home. In her letter to Mary, the English Queen was profuse in expressions of confidence in her kinswoman, repudiating the notion that she had ordered the

English fleet to watch and intercept the Scottish convoy, though she admits there were English vessels on the lookout for Scottish pirates. This last point was possibly inserted lest any "misadventure" should result in the capture and evil treatment of the Queen of Scots. It has not been proved that the commanders of the English vessels had instructions to intercept Mary's little fleet, but it is tolerably certain that any English captain who ventured to interrupt the course of high politics by making the Scottish Queen a prisoner would not have been visited with condign punishment. Mary's advent in Scotland at this time was not desired by the company of disreputable noblemen and apostate priests who had taken advantage of her absence to seize upon "the governance of the realm"; and Elizabeth, her devoted servant Cecil, and others at the English Court, dreaded that Mary's return thither would have an evil effect upon their plots to obtain control of the northern kingdom.

Among the Scottish leaders who were playing a double part the foremost was Lord James Stuart, Prior of St Andrews (afterwards the Regent Moray), the half-brother of Queen Mary, whose baleful influence overshadowed all her life. He was the son of James V. by Margaret Erskine, daughter of John, fourth Lord Erskine, and was born in 1533, being thus nine years older than Queen Mary. It was said that the

King had carried off the Lady Margaret on the very morning of her marriage to Sir Robert Douglas of Lochleven, and had married her. This was four years before the marriage of James V. to Magdalene of Valois, and six years before the King's second marriage, and there were some in Scotland who held that Lord James Stuart had a more rightful claim to the throne than Queen Mary. His conduct towards Mary implied that he believed in this right to reign, though he was too politic to assert it boldly. He had been present at the wedding of Mary and the Dauphin, and he had visited his widowed sister after the death of Francis. Mary trusted the Lord James far too completely, and this confidence in him ultimately led to her undoing. He was a master in duplicity, for while he was doing all he could to induce Elizabeth and Cecil to hinder Mary's return to Scotland, he was writing at the same time to her, urging that there could be no peace in the country till she came back to rule. The proof of this double-dealing is found in a remarkable letter written by him to the Queen from Edinburgh on 10th June 1561, which is preserved in the British Museum (Add. MSS. 32091, fol. 189). This document was printed in full for the first time in *The Scottish Historical Review* for January 1905, with a note by D. Murray Rose. In it Lord James plainly hints that the Queen should appoint a regent to govern during

her absence, leaving her to infer that he was most competent for that office. He also urges her return, stating that "there is nothing so necessary for the quieting of your realm and weal of your whole affairs as your Majesty's own presence, which I would wish were unfailing at the time affixed by your Highness." It is proved, however, by a letter which Randolph, the English Ambassador, wrote from Edinburgh on 8th August, that both Lord James and the Earl of Morton were earnestly striving to induce Elizabeth to hinder Mary's return—at the very time when Lord James at least was doing his utmost to induce Mary to come back to Scotland. Could it be his purpose to suggest that Elizabeth should have vessels ready to intercept Mary, while he was seeking to lure her into the trap thus prepared for her? His after conduct makes this theory extremely probable.

Maitland of Lethington was another of the Scottish leaders who delighted in double-dealing, though he was by far the most astute among them, with a mind more fitted for guiding a European empire than a diminutive insular kingdom. His learning, his fascinating manners, and his acuteness in political affairs had made him a favourite with Mary, but at this period in her life he was playing a double part. The unsettled state of Scotland after the death of the Queen-Regent made it difficult to foresee what might be the fate

of the nation. The Protestants, under Knox, were asserting themselves vigorously, and the unscrupulous noblemen who had joined with them were prepared for a religious revolution, craftily calculating that the dispersion of the ecclesiastical properties would be of advantage to them, precisely as the secularising of the estates of the Romish Church in England had benefited the English nobles. Lethington was temporising with the English Court, and evidently favoured the notion that Mary should not be suffered to return to Scotland. In one of his letters, of 10th August 1561, he declares that her advent at this time would produce "strange tragedies," thus hinting obscurely that these might be prevented were the Queen intercepted on her homeward way. In later years Lethington was to change his attitude towards Queen Mary; but at this crisis in her life he clearly thought that her coming might rally the Roman Catholic party to her side, and overthrow completely the Lords of the Congregation.

It was to a kingdom in this unsettled state that Mary Stuart was about to return. On 14th August 1561 the royal party, which had come to witness her departure, saw her embark at Calais. Her old playfellow, Francis of Guise and his wife, her uncle the Cardinal, and many others, whom her gentle manners and lovable disposition had drawn towards her, came to the landing-place with her. Mary was accompanied on board by her three

uncles of the House of Guise—the Duc d'Aumale, the Marquis d'Elbœuf, and the Grand Prior—and six-score of noble French gentlemen (among them being the Sieur de Brantôme, who was afterwards to describe this eventful voyage, and Chastelard, the poet, who was to die for indiscreet love of her), the lady attendants including her faithful maids-of-honour, the Four Maries—Mary Beaton, Mary Seaton, Mary Livingstone, and Mary Fleming —whose names are preserved in song and history. There, too, was John Lesley, afterwards Bishop of Ross, who was her most faithful friend during her long years of adversity, and was to become the principal contemporary historian of her life.

That embarkation was an event fraught with portentous omens. Hardly had the little squadron of "two galleys and four great ships" crossed the bar at Calais when an incident occurred that cast a deep gloom over the voyagers. A ship of unrecorded tonnage and unremembered name sought to make the port of Calais as Mary's convoy left it, but the fury of the waves, or the incompetence of the pilot, brought about a catastrophe. As she passed the galleys she struck on the bar, and with fearful speed she filled, and sank before the astonished gaze of the Court. In vain did the young Queen, in a paroxysm of excitement, implore her attendants to save the fated crew, for the doom of the ship and the mariners had been sealed. "Ah! mon Dieu!"

cried Mary as she sank on the deck, "what a portent for our voyage is this!" For days before her embarkation she had been mournful, and constantly in tears, and now her sorrow was increased by an incident that seemed, in a superstitious age, to predict imminent misfortune. Her position has been thus eloquently described by Andrew Lang: "Never had woman better cause to weep than Mary Stuart as she set forth on that path where her sorrows were to be. A girl of nineteen, she left the fair land of France, her kindly nurse, and the gentlemen of her blood who had loved and cherished her youth. She passed to a bleak shore where scarce three men were to be true to her; where her faith was daily and brutally insulted; where her every step would be commented on by the eloquent and charitable Knox. Over her devoted head were to break the thunders of a ruining world; her weapons were but a fair face, a subtle tongue, and an indomitable courage." ("History of Scotland," vol. ii. p. 100.)

The details of the voyage are supplied by Brantôme, who sailed in the same ship with her. "As long as the light of day continued she stood immovable on the vessel's deck, gazing with tearful eyes upon the French coast, and exclaiming incessantly: 'Farewell, France! farewell, my beloved country!' When night approached, and her friends besought her to retire to the cabin,

she hid her face in her hands, and sobbed aloud. 'The darkness which is now brooding over France,' said she, 'is like the darkness in my own heart.' . . . Having caused a bed to be made for her on deck she wept herself asleep, previously enjoining her attendants to awaken her at the first peep of day if the French coast were still visible. Her wishes were gratified, for during the night the wind died away, and the vessel made little progress. Mary rose with the dawn, and feasted her eyes once more with a sight of France. At sunrise, however, the breeze returned, and, the galley beginning to make way, the land rapidly receded in the distance. Again her tears burst forth, and again she exclaimed: 'Farewell, beloved France! I shall never, never see you more!'"

Two hundred years after this incident occurred, the romance of the situation impelled Meusnier de Querlon, a literary man and novelist, to write several verses on the subject, purporting to be the lament of Queen Mary. So well did these lines suit the occasion that they have frequently been assigned to the Queen herself. De Querlon was born at Nantes in 1702, and he died in 1780. The verses were first published by him in 1765, and they have have been frequently translated, one of the earliest versions being published anonymously in *The Edinburgh Magazine* for 1796. The first verse of the original is as follows:—

Adieu, plaisant pays de France !
O ma patrie,
La plus cherie,
Qui a nourri ma jeune enfance.
Adieu, France ! adieu, mes beaux jours !
La nef qui déjoint mes amours.
N'à cy de moi que la moitié ;
Une parte te reste ; elle est tienne ;
Je la fie à ton amitié
Pour que de l'autre il te souvienne !

The translation by Henry Glassford Bell, published in 1822, preserves some of the spirit of the original :

Adieu, thou pleasant land of France !
The dearest of all lands to me,
Where life was like a joyous dance—
The joyful dance of infancy.

Farewell my childhood's laughing wiles,
Farewell the joys of youth's bright day ;
The bark that bears me from thy smiles
Bears but my meaner half away.

The best is thine—the changeless heart
Is given, beloved France ! to thee ;
And let it sometimes, though we part,
Remind thee with a sigh of me.

With feelings such as these Mary Stuart looked tearfully upon the receding shores of France, and then turned her eyes, with dread anticipation, towards that dim northern land where she was to fulfil in sorrow and suffering her mournful destiny.

CHAPTER VII

THE RETURN TO SCOTLAND

"Gar get to me my gude grey steed,
My menyie a' gae wi' me,
For I shall neither eat nor drink
Till E'nbrugh toun shall see me!"

An' she has muntit her gude grey steed,
Her menyie a' gaed wi' her,
An' she did neither eat nor drink
Till E'nbrugh toun did see her.

Ballad of "Geordie Gordon."

HISTORIANS differ as to many of the incidents of Mary's adventurous voyage to Scotland. Some of them maintain that a fog encompassed the little fleet shortly after it left Calais, and remained during the whole of the journey; others that it was only when she approached Scotland that the blinding mist fell upon the Queen's ships; and rival writers assign opposite causes for this natural phenomenon. Her faithful Lesley, who was one of the company, and ought to have known, writes that she left Calais on Thursday, 14th August, and proceeds: "Fra that, making saill, and rowing throw the seys with prosperous weddir, bot allwayis (as God wald haif it) covered

with mist all the way, so that the Quene of Inglandis shippis, quha was awating upoun that pray, culd nivir get sicht of the gallayis quhill thay war past the coist of Ingland, and happely arrivit in the raid of Leith with all hir Majesteis cumpanye." Here it will be noticed that Lesley believed that the English ships were on the look-out to intercept Mary, and that a special providence intervened to prevent her capture. As has been mentioned, Elizabeth had sent a safe-conduct for Mary by the Scottish Queen's messengers; but she had sailed from Calais before they returned, and thus Lesley and his companions could not know that they were in no immediate danger. Nevertheless, two Dutch vessels carrying her horses and mules were seized by the English fleet, and the horses were detained at Tynemouth for a month, not having regular passports; while one of Mary's ships, with the Earl of Eglinton and his suite, was intercepted as suspected of piracy, but soon released.

While Lesley regarded the fog as a sign of divine favour, John Knox gave quite a different explanation. On the forenoon of Tuesday, 19th August, the Queen arrived at Leith, her ships looming darkly through the humid mist. And thus Knox interpreted the omen when writing his "History":

"The very face of the heavens, the time of her arrival, did manifestly speak what comfort was

brought unto this country with her, to wit, sorrow, darkness, dolour, and all impiety; for, in the memory of man, that day of the year, was never seen a more dolorous face of the heaven than was at her arrival, which two days after did so continue. For besides the surface weitt and corruption of the air, the mist was so thick and dark that scarce might any man espy another the length of two pair of butts; the sun was not seen to shine two days before nor two days after. That fore-warning gave God unto us, but, alas, the most part were blind."

For good or ill Queen Mary had returned to Scotland, and the first welcome she received was but a cold and cheerless one. Her intention had been to pass forward from Leith to Holyrood immediately upon her landing, but Lord James Stuart was so perplexed by her unexpected appearance that he had made no preparations for her reception. As we have seen, he had strongly urged her to return, and he had with equal ardour urged Elizabeth to capture Mary on the voyage. If his advice to Mary was sincere he should have been ready to receive her with befitting pomp. His unreadiness suggests that his plan for capture had miscarried, and he was thus disconcerted. The Queen had to dine as a private person in the house of Captain Andrew Lambie of Leith, and then no suitable cortege for a royal progress to Edinburgh could be found. One may imagine

how keenly the young Queen would feel this neglect. To her companions, the associates of the most extravagant Court in Europe, "this poor furniture and mean array" could have only one of two explanations: either it was a convincing proof of the utter poverty of her kingdom, or else it showed that the Scottish lords cared so little for her that they would not trouble to provide an equipage.

The people of Edinburgh, heedless of their rulers, turned out in a body to greet their young Queen. The neighbourhood of Holyrood was aglow with illuminations, rude enough, doubtless, and not to be compared to the brilliant display which France would have made on a similar occasion, but not the less indicative of the jubilant feeling with which the subjects welcomed their mistress. Hardly had the Queen retired with her chamberwomen to the seclusion of her apartments in Holyrood Palace than she was awakened by sounds which to her exquisitely sensitive ear would sound barbarous in the extreme. These were the accents of a band of serenaders, whom John Knox calls "a company of most honest men, who, with instruments of music and musicans, gave their salutations at her chalmer windo." Honest men, no doubt, who sought to cheer the heart of the mourning young widow by singing psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs! The candid Brantôme took a different view of the incident. He writes:

HOLYROOD PALACE BEFORE THE FIRE OF 1650

From De Witt's engraving of a drawing by Gordon of Rothiemay

"There came under her window five or six hundred ragamuffins of that town, who gave her a concert of the vilest fiddles and little rebecs, which are as bad as they can be in that country, and accompanied them with singing of psalms, but so wretchedly out of tune that nothing could be worse. Ah! what melody it was! What a lullaby for the night!"

Thus did Mary spend her first night in Holyrood. Her sensitive heart pardoned the execrable music because of the good will of the singers, and, despite the remonstrances of her maidens and the ridicule of the French knights, she "willed that the same be continued."

It would not be easy to imagine a more critical situation for a young princess to be placed in than that which Mary now occupied. Educated in the most rigorous tenets of an ultra-Catholic faith, and taught by her early preceptors to trace back the wars and tumults which had devastated the Continent of Europe to the unsettling influence of Protestantism, it need not be considered wonderful that she looked with some measure of distrust and trepidation upon the professors of that religion who now ruled among her counsellors. In the Court, and amongst the family where her life had hitherto been spent, no epithet had been too opprobrious, no censure too severe, to visit upon the adherents of the new faith, and she had thus insensibly come to regard the Reformers as the

enemies alike of Church and State. This must be borne in mind when judgment is passed upon her conduct in this crisis of her affairs.

Every student of the history of that turbulent time must admit that Protestantism, though the purer creed, was then professed by some of the vilest of men—and this was especially the case with the Scottish noblemen of the period. Nor could Mary be blind to the fact (doubtless emphasised by her tutor the Cardinal), that the introduction of this heresy to England was directly due to the uncondoned adultery of Henry VIII., and that it was maintained there by his (so-called) illegitimate daughter Elizabeth, in order that the throne which she had usurped might be secured to her. And when Mary looked around her own Court, and saw it filled by Protestant nobles, to whom murder was a pastime and theft a means of support, she could not readily deem it a duty to relinquish her creed for another which promised so poor an advance upon it. But she was sufficiently wise to see that for a time at least the control of her kingdom was practically in the power of the Lords of the Congregation, and she determined to adopt a policy of toleration, even though that might seem to be forbidden by her own creed. But Knox and his associates, like all new converts, were intolerant of toleration, and the contest between the rival creeds speedily began.

Following the promptings of that devout spirit

which she manifested even to the last, Mary prepared to attend Mass at the Chapel Royal of Holyrood upon the Sunday morning after her arrival. The Protestant Lords were at once thrown into a state of trepidation. Was the young Queen whom they had brought—or rather had suffered to come—to her own kingdom about to plunge them again into all the idolatries of Romanism? They would not suffer it! They would rather pull down the Chapel about her ears than have it polluted by such ceremonies. But her brother, the Lord James, not yet sure as to which creed would be safest for him, and fearful lest she should bring to recollection his promise when in France that she might worship God in such fashion as seemed best to her, undertook to keep the door of the Chapel for her, and to bar out intruders. Despite his vigilance, however, some of Mary's servants were threatened with death as idolaters—that being the most speedy and effectual means of conversion.

The leader of the Protestant party at this time was unquestionably John Knox, the intrepid champion of the new faith, who had endured many privations and suffered torture and imprisonment for the truth's sake. It was natural, therefore, that Mary, with the most pacific intentions, should seek an interview with him shortly after her arrival in Edinburgh, especially as he had been represented to her as one of her most formid-

able enemies. His plain speaking had not been greatly relished by her mother, and no doubt the Guises had prejudiced her against him. Nevertheless, she determined to meet him in person, that she might discover, perchance, some mutual platform of agreement betwixt them which would conduce to the peace of the realm.

Of that important interview we have no record save that which Knox has preserved, and, since he imputes motives in his narrative of the scene, we cannot place implicit reliance upon his testimony. One would like to have had Queen Mary's account of this interview to check John Knox's version. From his own statement he seems to have reproached and insulted Mary by imputing the crimes of her ancestors as charges against her, adroitly avoiding an accusation of treason by a subtle trick of speech. The choice between Geneva and Rome, when represented by such an advocate, would not cause her much perplexity. She would remember that the faith which she held had been the consolation of her forefathers for generations, while the new form of faith had literally sent not "peace on earth but a sword." The forbearance which she proposed was indignantly rejected. A tolerant and non-persecuting religion was incomprehensible to both parties. Consequently, when on 25th August 1561 she issued a proclamation enjoining that none of her subjects "take upon hand privately or openly to

make any alteration or innovation of the state of religion, or attempt anything against the same, which her Majesty found publicly and universally standing at her Majesty's arrival in this realm, under pain of death," she satisfied neither party. Arran publicly protested against the protection thus afforded to the Queen's household and her French visitors, which would permit them to hear and celebrate the idolatrous Mass; but the majority of the Lords of the Congregation submitted to what Knox calls "the Queen's flattering words," though they bided their time.

In spite of the warnings and denunciations of the ministers, it was decided that the people of Scotland should have an opportunity of welcoming their Sovereign in the ancient manner, and Sunday, 2nd September, was set apart to be observed as a high holiday. Early on the morning of that day the Queen, attended by her principal nobles, set forth from the Palace of Holyrood, and, taking the route by the Canongate, made her way to the Castle. The citizens turned out in vast numbers to witness the spectacle, and at various points on the way special pageants had been prepared, which are all carefully described in the "Diurnal of Occurrents." After dinner at the Castle the Queen mounted her palfrey to return townwards, and was met at the West Bow by a company of fifty masqueraders gorgeously attired, and was received under a canopy of purple velvet,

borne aloft by eight dutiful subjects in brilliant costumes. At the Butter Tron an artificial arch had been erected, and gaily decorated, "upon which port were singing certain bairnes in most heavenly-wise." Here she was presented with the keys of the city, together with a Bible and a psalm-book, and poetical speeches were addressed to her. At the Tolbooth three "fair virgins," representing Fortune, Justice, and Policy, made addresses to her, apparently directed against Romish supremacy. When she came to the Market Cross she found "four fair virgins clad in the most heavenly clothing," who addressed her, while the wine ran out of the spouts of the Cross in great abundance. At the Nether Bow a scaffold had been erected, and after certain speeches had been made the dragon that represented, possibly, the antichrist was burned, a psalm was sung, and the Queen returned to Holyrood with her convoy of Oriental masqueraders. All through these ceremonies it was plain that the intention was to show that the people, having gained religious liberty, were not again to be willingly enslaved. And when Mary retired to her chamber at Holyrood after this day of exhausting festivities she would not be able to close her eyes to the evident fact that her life in Scotland, despite the devotion of her subjects, did not promise to be a path strewn with thornless roses.

The princely pageants to welcome Mary's return were not to be confined to Edinburgh. Partly to please her people, and partly to make herself familiar with her own kingdom, she planned a royal progress through the portion of the country nearest to the capital, and therefore most under Protestant sway. On 11th September, accompanied by the most prominent members of her Court, she set out on horseback from Holyrood, and spent the night beneath the roof of Linlithgow Palace, the place of her birth. She naturally selected Stirling as her next stage, since it was closely associated with her early memories. Thence she proceeded to Perth, at one time the centre of Romanism in Scotland, but now entirely "reformed." Following the road which winds by the River Tay through the fertile Carse of Gowrie, she reached the ancient burgh of Dundee, and, embarking at the port, she crossed to St Andrews. Here she remained for a few days, and then, striking westward, she visited the Palace of Falkland, where her father, whom she had never seen, had expired. Skirting the shores of Lochleven, soon to have a sinister connection with her fate, she at length reached Edinburgh, eighteen days after setting out. An incident full of warning had occurred at Stirling. It was intended to celebrate High Mass in the Chapel Royal, but the Earl of Argyll and the Lord James so disturbed the choir that a fracas took place,

and some blood was drawn, though the tumult was quickly stilled. There was an evil omen in it, however, which Mary could not despise.

Hardly had she returned ere another warning incident occurred. Archibald Douglas, the Provost, and the Magistrates of Edinburgh, in their zeal for the welfare of the Church, overstepped the bounds of discretion. They issued a proclamation banishing all "Papists and idolaters" from the burgh, under penalties then only exacted from incorrigible malefactors. Resenting this action as an insult both to her personal feelings and her regal authority, Mary promptly ordered the Town Council to depose the civic rulers, and elect others in their place. The Councillors, overawed by this prompt assertion of power, at once proceeded to execute her mandate. But the gage of battle had been thrown down to her, and her acceptance of it had estranged the Protestant party from her cause. The first mutterings of the storm which was impending over her might now be plainly heard.

The proclamation of toleration which Mary had publicly made, and which has already been mentioned, expressly forbade precisely such conduct as that of the Provost and Magistrates. If she were to retain her position as the supreme ruler in Scotland she could not overlook this flagrant act of insubordination, and her punish-

ment of the offenders was strictly lawful. But it was misrepresented. The repressive measure had been forced upon her by the unwarrantable exercise of authority by her inferiors, but it was denounced as tyranny. Shortly after the checkmate which she gave to the Town Council the question was openly discussed: "Whether that the subjects might put hand to suppress the idolatry of their Prince?" The nobles who took the Queen's part were the Lord James, the Earl of Morton, the Earl Marischal, Secretary Lethington, Lord Justice-Clerk, and James MacGill, the Clerk of Register; but against these were the principal ministers, led by John Knox. The votes of the nobles prevailed, much to the disgust of Knox. This was really a crisis in the history of Scotland. The nobles were plainly growing weary of the dominion of the ministers, and were coming more under the fascination of Mary's charming personality. But for certain untoward incidents which estranged them from the Queen the whole subsequent history of Scotland might have been different.

Though victorious in her contest with the Council the effect of Mary's supremacy was rather dangerous than otherwise. The Catholics hailed it as a proof of her steadfast adhesion to their form of worship, while the Protestants could not consider it as other than an outrage on their creed. And thus the efforts of Mary to hold the

balance fairly were distorted from their intention. In the midst of this internal disorder she conceived the bold and diplomatic project of a Border expedition. Her father, James V., had rendered good service in that quarter by his unflinching courage, and the Border forays, which from time immemorial had kept alive the feud betwixt England and Scotland, were now very limited in extent and influence. She took the opportunity of sending her trusted brother, the Lord James Stuart, with the Earl of Bothwell, the Earl of Home, and some others of the nobles devoted to her person, to quell the disturbances which had arisen upon the Marches. The public mind was thus diverted for a time from the internal strife which had engaged attention, and the far-seeing purpose of the Queen was served. The success which attended this warlike expedition made her more popular than ever.

About this time a new character appeared who was to take a prominent part in the long tragedy of Mary Stuart. When the Ambassador of the Duke of Savoy had come to the Court of Scotland there was in his train a certain Italian called David Riccio (often spelled Rizzio), who was learned in languages, in diplomacy, and in music, and was, besides, a devout Roman Catholic. He attended the special services held by the Queen in memory of her late husband, Francis II., and took part in the musical portion. The

year of Mary's widowhood was now accomplished, and, though still unwon, her lovers pressed importunately upon her. But she was not ready yet to take again the marriage yoke, and she bowed her head as reverently in the Chapel Royal at Holyrood in remembrance of her late husband as though weeks and not months had separated them. It was at this memorial service that Mary first heard Riccio's voice uplifted in the notes which implored mercy for her first husband: she was yet to hear that same voice, raised for the last time, to beseech protection from the murderous cruelty of her second husband.

As there have been various accounts of David Riccio which are contradictory of each other it may be necessary to give an authentic description of him. Riccio has been stigmatised by Mary's enemies as a fiddler and a buffoon, a kind of hanger-on of royalty, much about the level of a king's jester. The following notice of him is from an official document:—

"The Conte di Moretta brought with him as secretary one David Riccio di Pancalieri, in Piedmont, who had in like manner served Monsignor the Archbishop of Turin, because he could well express his ideas in the idioms of Italy and France, and he was so good a musician that the Queen caused him to assist always at the Mass at her Palace; and as since her return she had

wished to have a complete musical band—for she took great delight in singing and the sound of the viol—she required her uncle, the Marquis d'Elbœuf, to ask the Conte di Moretta to relinquish his secretary, David, and leave him in Scotland. She made him Groom of the Chamber, and finally her own Secretary, having been recommended by her uncle, Cardinal de Lorraine, to take him in that capacity, because his dwarfish and deformed person would disarm scandal." This description will throw much light upon one of the tragic events in Mary's career.

A whole year had now flown since the time of the death of her husband, and Mary found herself in very different circumstances from those in which she had been placed in France. The future lowered darkly before her, for she could not escape the conviction that she had to match her woman's wit and her feminine methods against the plans of some of the most astute and unscrupulous men of the time. She had left the kingdom of France, where her beauty alone might have won high position for her, and she had returned to a desolate realm, where her title to rule was questioned by the meanest of her subjects, and where every benevolent act to which her heart prompted her became the subject of misrepresentation, and the cause of frightful dissension.

To judge from the gruesome New Year's

welcome which Alexander Scot, "the Scottish Anacreon," addressed to her at the opening of 1562, one might imagine that her sorrows were but beginning. A verse or two from this little-known poem may be quoted. Poetical critics will admire the alliteration, genealogists the epithets, and Church historians the sound advice which they convey:

> Welcome, illustrate Ladye, and our Queene ;
> Welcome, our Lion with the Fleur-de-Lis ;
> Welcome, our Thistle with the Lorraine Green ;
> Welcome, our rubent Rose upon the rise ;
> Welcome, our Gem, and joyful Genetrice ;
> Welcome, our Belle of Albion, to bear ;
> Welcome, our pleasant Princesse, maist of price ;
> God give you grace against this guid New Yeare !

Then follows some excellent counsel to the Queen, albeit extremely difficult to transform into action, however willing she might be:

> Gar stanche all stryfe, and stabill thy estaits
> In constance, concord, charite, and luve,
> Be busy now to banish all debates
> Betwixt Kirkmen and temporal men does move ;
> The pulling down of policie reprove,
> And let perversit prelattis leif perquier,
> To do the best besekand God above
> To give thee grace against this guid New Year !

Though thus profuse of advice, the poet resiles from the great problem of putting his counsel into force. He will not venture to decide upon the abstruse questions of doctrine which then agitated the minds of men. These difficulties he leaves for the helpless young Queen to settle:

With messe or matynes nowayis will I mell,
To judge them justly passes my ingyne.
They gyde nocht ill that governis weill themsell,
And lelalie on lawtie layis their lyne ;
Doutis to discus, for doctouris are devyne,
Cunning in clergie to declair them cleir ;
To ordour this the office now is thyne,
God give thee grace against this guid New Year !

CHAPTER VIII

THE SECOND BRIDAL

Think not of the future ; the prospect is uncertain ;
Laugh away the present, while laughing hours remain.
Those who gaze too boldly through Time's mystic curtain
Soon will wish to close it, and dream of joy again.
T. HAYNES BAYLY.

THE steadfast adherence of Mary to the creed of her forefathers, even while she gave liberty to those who differed from her, disappointed the rulers with whom she was associated. The Lords of the Congregation found that she was no weak woman to submit herself to their dictation, and they saw that some change must be made if the power were not to pass entirely out of their hands. In these circumstances Lord James Stuart became a kind of go-between, striving to keep control of both parties. Mary had not yet discovered his duplicity, nor did she suspect his overweening ambition. So great was her affection for him that she lavished fortune and honour upon him with unsparing hand. She created him Earl of Mar, and shortly afterwards conferred upon him the title of Earl of Moray, though by doing so she made an enemy of the Earl of Huntly, who then

held the title, and who was the leading Romanist in Scotland. The marriage of Moray with Agnes Keith, daughter of the Earl Marischal, had increased his hold upon the national party, and that vain and unprincipled dame materially aided his schemes. Her love of finery, and the flattering regard she professed for French fashions, enabled her to gain Mary's ear, and to win her way into the Queen's confidence by attacking the weakest side of female character.

A contest now arose between the Romanists and Protestants as to which party should bind Mary to its side by a matrimonial alliance. She had already, as we have seen, suffered something like persecution from the numerous wooers in France after her husband's death, who were (like those vain supplicants in the ballad) "wooin' at her, pu'in' at her, courtin' her, and winna get her." That grey-haired lover, Eric of Sweden, sent a special envoy to plead his cause, but he was speedily dismissed with a refusal. The young Earl of Arran (son of the Governor), who had been plighted to her in infancy, was brought forward by the Protestants, though his strange conduct had plainly shown that his mind was unhinged, and the Protestants would have had little advantage with a madman on the throne. On the other side there was Philip II. of Spain again offering the hand of his son, Don Carlos — a proposal which had the approval of the House

HENRY, LORD DARNLEY

From the painting of Darnley and his brother

By LUCAS DE HEERE

of Guise. Meanwhile Elizabeth had mysteriously warned Mary against committing herself to any matrimonial alliance, hinting that she had a proposal to make far more beneficial than those which had been mooted. Mary's desire had ever been to keep on good terms with Elizabeth, so she postponed her decision.

It was only natural that Mary should strive to discover the mysterious personage whom Elizabeth had in view. There was only one person at the Court of England whom she could consider as eligible, and that person was Henry Darnley, son of the Earl of Lennox. His relationship to the Queen may be briefly explained. Matthew Stuart, fourth Earl of Lennox, had married Lady Margaret Douglas, daughter of Archibald, Earl of Angus, by Margaret, Queen-Dowager of James IV. and mother of Mary's father, James V. The Countess of Lennox was, therefore, cousin of Elizabeth, and her son, Henry Darnley, was Mary's second cousin. To put it simply, Queen Elizabeth, the Countess of Lennox, and James V. were full cousins, and Queen Mary and Darnley were representatives of the next generation. Darnley was born at Temple Newsam, in Yorkshire, in 1545, and was three years the junior of Mary. Her first introduction to him had taken place in France immediately after the death of Francis, and he had been allowed, contrary to custom, to visit her clandestinely in

her "dool-chamber," that he might convey the message of sympathy sent by his mother, Lady Lennox. This meeting had a savour of romance, and the youth's handsome appearance and elegant address had awakened Mary's interest in him. It would be absurd to suppose that Mary had then fallen in love with this "long, lean lad"—as he was described—but his adventure would probably dwell in her memory. As Mary knew that he was at the Court of Elizabeth, and as she was aware that he had a remote claim to the thrones of England and Scotland, she might naturally imagine that Elizabeth would seek to conjoin two claimants by furthering this marriage.

Elizabeth had no such purpose in view. She played a much finer game, designing rather to cast indignity upon the crown of Scotland than to minister to the happiness of its wearer. She veiled her intention under shadowy hints and suggestive sentences, which served only to raise Mary's curiosity. Over and over again did Elizabeth's Ambassador lead up his conferences with Mary to the point of disclosure, and then abruptly change the subject to avoid naming the party, on the plea that it was premature. The matter at last could no longer be shrouded in mystery. The Duke of Anjou, the brother of her late husband, was proposed as a suitable husband for Mary, and Elizabeth, afraid lest Mary should decide without her concurrence, was

compelled to disclose her plan. To the surprise and indignation of Mary she learned that the much-vaunted husband who was to confer both honour and happiness upon her was no other than Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester—the alleged murderer of Amy Robsart—who was the intimate favourite of Elizabeth, but a very unequal match for Mary. Dudley and Elizabeth had been confined in the Tower of London in their early days because of their Protestant opinions, and it was the current scandal in the European courts that they had been more to each other than Queen and subject. To Mary it would appear that Elizabeth sought to place one of her own minions in the position of Consort of Scotland, that she might control through him the northern kingdom, and rule Great Britain ere the two crowns were united. As Queen, this proposition was resented by Mary; as woman, her pride revolted at the suggestion that she should take to her arms the cast-off lover of Elizabeth, and reward his alleged amours with the Queen of England by making him Prince-Consort of Scotland. Besides, it was "bruited abroad" that Leicester had compassed the death of his first wife, and few self-respecting women would care to risk themselves in the hands of an unscrupulous murderer. It seems a hard thing to say, yet it would not be unreasonable for Mary to think that Leicester, an

accomplished wife murderer, was intended to take the crown-matrimonial of Scotland, "remove" the Queen, and unite the two kingdoms by marrying Elizabeth. Such a scheme would be abhorrent to twentieth-century ideas, but not to those of a period when assassination was a common political device in Europe.

The feminine side of Mary's character must always be considered when her political actions are being discussed. Had there been no other reason for rejecting Leicester, the language of the heart would have decided. How could she hesitate—a young woman scarce out of her teens—between the youthful and handsome Darnley, a prince of the blood-royal, and a matured and scheming politician like Dudley, who in later years disowned his second marriage and strove to make his son illegitimate? Well might she have exclaimed with Thomson's melodramatic heroine:

> Oh! dreadful change!—for Tancred, haughty Osmund!

Her thoughts turned towards Darnley, and precisely at this time the Countess of Lennox corresponded with Mary, and offered her son as consort. It is very probable that a secret betrothal took place, though Mary concealed it alike from the Scottish nobles and the English spies. She seemed to encourage the Spanish project, she consented to a conference as to

the Leicester proposal, and thus, in womanly fashion, she foiled deceit by subterfuge. Her first step was to recall the banished Earl of Lennox, the father of Darnley, and to cancel his attainder. Darnley then obtained permission to pass to the north, from which he had been excluded.

With the exception of her brief interview with him in her chamber of mourning, Mary had never seen Darnley, and before their meeting took place she was to have a warlike experience. Elizabeth had been temporising with Mary, and proposing a friendly meeting which she probably never intended to take place. Mary had the notion of making a royal progress to the north, but she delayed this plan till Elizabeth should settle about the meeting of the two Queens. When Elizabeth, after much delay, decided that the conference could not be carried out for a year, Mary determined to fulfil her own plan, and make a journey to the north, which part of her kingdom she had never seen. In August 1562 the Queen and the Court set out, the route being to Stirling, and thence by Coupar-Angus, Perth, Edzell, and Glamis to Aberdeen.

Huntly was the leader of the Romanist party, and in ordinary circumstances the Queen would have visited him; but he had been opposed to the meeting with Elizabeth, and his son, John Gordon, who was a refugee from justice, was in

hiding with his father. She refused, therefore, to go near Huntly's abode, and took her way to Inverness. On 9th September she reached Inverness, and there found that she was denied admittance to the Castle, which was held for Huntly as Sheriff. Irritated at this action, which, indeed, might be construed as rebellion, since Huntly was only keeper of the Castle for the Queen, Mary caused the place to be taken by assault, and Captain Gordon was hanged. "This was the beginning of further trouble," wrote John Knox. Huntly assembled his retainers, to the number of about 800 (Lesley says 1200), and Mary summoned an armed force to meet her at Aberdeen. The country was evidently on the verge of civil war, and, strangely enough, the Catholic Queen was leading the Protestant army against the foremost Catholic nobleman. On 28th October 1562 the Battle of Corrichie took place, and resulted in the route of the Gordons. Huntly was taken prisoner, and set on the horse of his captor, but immediately fell to the ground dead, "without any wound, or yitt appearance of strock whairof death might have ensued." The fugitive Sir John Gordon, who had at one time been regarded as a suitor for the hand of the Queen, was taken, and executed at Aberdeen.

The cause of Huntly's overthrow has been variously explained by different historians. It

seems madness on her part to have done battle with the great Catholic leader if she meant to restore Romanism. The likeliest theory is that Moray, who had the ear of the Queen, and who sought Huntly's destruction, imflamed her against his rival, and thus secured a double advantage—he brought about the removal of his enemy, and he prejudiced Mary's position with the Catholics of Europe as well as of Scotland. Mary was thus unwittingly made to play into the hands of Elizabeth.

After Mary's return from the north to Edinburgh the matrimonial projects were revived. These need not be further detailed. Suffice it to say that, while politicians of all kinds were plotting her marriage with kings and princes, the Queen had made up her mind to marry Darnley. Moray and Lethington, when they got an inkling of her feelings towards Darnley, seemed to approve the match, or at least to prefer Darnley to Leicester. On 13th October 1564 Lennox was permitted to return to Scotland. In the following January Mary visited Fife with a few retainers, as if for a holiday. She remained for some days at St Andrews, and then, by a special arrangement, went to Wemyss Castle on 17th February, and, by secret appointment, met Darnley for the second time. The impression made on her was very favourable. Darnley was an accomplished courtier, a skilled musician, and had been reared as a Catholic,

though his father latterly had inclined towards Protestantism. Mary knew that her marriage was a political necessity if she were to retain her crown, and she believed that in Darnley she had found the "proper man" to share her power. Religion, statecraft, and personal affection now combined to make her union with him a reasonable and expedient course. She returned to Edinburgh confirmed in her purpose.

Moray was ever on the alert to secure favour where it could be found, and he took Darnley under his special care. He introduced him to the Lords of the Congregation, and made much of him on every occasion. Darnley became arrogant amid this flattery, and condescended to accept the homage of one whose illegitimacy had proved a bar to the throne of his father; and thus these two ill-assorted companions parted at daggers drawn, Moray believing that he had nothing to fear from Darnley's haughty spirit, and Darnley despising his enemy. Events proved that both were wrong. The rumour of Mary's betrothal to Darnley was soon current at the Court, and Darnley urged matrimony upon the Queen, impelled alike by the ardency of his affections and the emptiness of his purse. But Mary put him off repeatedly, and he had to apply for aid to a third person. This was no other than Riccio, with whose fate Darnley was afterwards to be deeply concerned.

DAVID RICCIO

As painted on a panel in 1564

The versatility of Riccio, who had succeeded to the post of French Secretary to the Queen in December 1564, had early attracted the attention of Darnley. The skill of the foreign musician, his fluency as a linguist, and his artistic tastes made Riccio, then thirty years of age, a congenial companion for the young nobleman, not out of his teens. The Secretary naturally became the confidant of the lovers, and no doubt delighted in the intrigue, which Mary still kept secret. Towards the end of March 1565 Mary visited Stirling, and resided in the Castle, and apartments were assigned there to Darnley. Here he fell ill of some obscure disease — supposed to have been measles—and during the continuance of his malady the earnest solicitude of the Queen was so apparent that her secret was revealed. Riccio did his utmost to bring matters to a crisis, and, using Darnley's illness as a pretext, he endeavoured to promote a secret marriage. The nearness of the kinship of Mary and Darnley made a special dispensation from the Pope a necessary preliminary, and means were taken to procure it. Meanwhile she was persuaded to go through the ceremony of a private marriage with Darnley in the room occupied by Riccio in Stirling Castle. Until the dispensation arrived this could be no more than a serious betrothal, but it was sufficient to seal her fate both as wife and Queen. This act of inconsiderate folly,

whereby she bound herself to the gay young lord, whose incapacity was visible to everyone but herself, was purely her own, and brought a lifelong punishment upon her. She had arrived at one of the turning-points in her career, and her wrong choice was fatal.

Mary had despatched an emissary to the Court of France to intimate her intention of wedding Darnley, and shortly after the clandestine marriage she heard with satisfaction that Catherine de Medicis and the King approved of the match. Probably Catherine foresaw the ruin which would follow this union, as she knew Darnley's character, but, in any case, she would rejoice that this marriage would prevent any further alliance by marriage with France. And had Mary possessed the crafty nature which some of her biographers have discovered in her, the eagerness with which her old enemy consented to this wedding would have awakened her suspicions. The rage of Elizabeth when she heard of the affair was unbounded. That the proffer of Leicester's hand was thus scorned and derided evoked her wrath, and in the first moments of her rage she devised schemes of revenge which her wiser hours rejected.

Darnley recovered from his sickness, but injudiciously exposed himself to the keen April weather, and brought on an attack of fever. Now that their engagement was known Mary openly

attended him, and the love and devotion which kings had sought was lavished upon one who proved himself all unworthy of it.

Among the Scottish nobles the announcement of the proposed marriage caused a rearrangement of parties. Moray saw that the elevation of one who had broken away from his control to the highest place in the State meant the termination of his power. The Governor Arran (now Duke of Chatelherault) was persuaded by Moray that the raising of a Papist to the throne would bring back the old religion, and Arran joined with the Lords of the Congregation to prevent this catastrophe. A secret bond was signed by the leading Protestants to thwart the supposed intentions of the Queen. This action soon reached the ears of Mary, and she expressed her indignation at the conspiracy in unmeasured terms.

The worst method of curing love is to abuse the loved one, and the calumnies of the lords only roused her obstinacy, and made her cling more firmly to her purpose. Darnley's haughtiness and pride, unsupported by any special ability, had made him distasteful to both the French and the Scottish politicians. The Cardinal of Lorraine had described him as a vain coxcomb, and had warned Mary, "if she valued her future happiness, to give up all thought of him." Moray, who had now become thoroughly alienated from Darnley, denounced him as "rather

an enemy than a preserver of Christ's true religion." Knox described Darnley as "somewhat given to wine, much feeding, and likewise to inconstancy, and proud beyond measure, and therefore contemned of all others." Randolph, the English Ambassador, spoke of Darnley as "the young, handsome, long lord that looked ever so lofty in the Court where he went." But all these attacks upon Darnley made Mary more determined to wed him. For, with all her gentleness, there lay dormant in her breast that spirit of headstrong wilfulness which was one of the characteristics of her race, and which had ruined her father and slain her grandfather before her. To expedite matters she summoned the Scottish nobles to meet her at Stirling to consult upon her marriage, and, stating that she "had contracted marriage with the Lord Darnley," she asked that they would ratify her choice, and confer upon him the crown-matrimonial. Moray declined to commit himself; but the Queen's own grace and complaisance, and the judicious statecraft of Morton, her Chancellor, won over many to her support, and when she declared her intention in the Parliament Hall in Stirling Castle, the consent of the lords was practically unanimous. So rapidly was the matter accomplished that the Ambassador of Elizabeth, who had posted down from London to present her protest, only arrived in time to find his mission unavailing. The consent of

the nobles had been given to the marriage, and steps were at once taken to have it solemnised.

A quaint old writer who lived in the succeeding age, in his advice to the grandson of Darnley, the young Prince Henry, thus warns him by his own experience:

> And you shall find the greatest enemy
> That man can have is his prosperity.

No better proof of this maxim could be found than is afforded by the life of the new consort-elect. The lightness of his mental character was apparent to all save Mary. The favour he had received only developed his self-conceit and encouraged his pride; but the Queen discovered graces in his very weakness, and condoned his foolish arrogance as prompted by zeal for her service.

The attitude of Mary towards Darnley forced Moray to prompt action, for he saw that the power he sought was passing away from him, and, though he had silently consented to the marriage, he determined, if possible, to prevent it. He laid before her an accusation that Lennox and Darnley had conspired to take his life and seize upon his possessions. However astute in his management of men, Moray did not know how to deal with love-sick women. The Queen at once took up arms in defence of her paladin. She ordered Moray to produce proof of his allegations before the Lords

of the Council, stating that she would proceed no further with the marriage if he established his accusation. But Moray declined to do so, and after a second and third message had been sent to him, threatening to denounce him as a rebel, the craven Earl fled to Argyllshire, and strove to incite the western nobles to insurrection. Thus the breach between Mary and her brother was widened, and the Queen became naturally more attached to Darnley because of this false accusation.

Elizabeth now took action against this marriage. She sent an imperious message, demanding that Lennox and Darnley, who had been permitted to return to Scotland merely to regain their estates, should at once be sent back to England. Her demand was disregarded. A plot which Moray organised to seize upon the Queen, Darnley, and Lennox, to confine Mary for life in Lochleven, and to hand the two others over to the tender mercy of Elizabeth, was, fortunately, thwarted by Mary's activity. While on her way from Perth to Queensferry she obtained information of this plot upon the liberties of herself and her consort, and by the simple expedient of an early start she passed the appointed place of ambush, at Paran-well, near Kinross, ere the traitor lords had assembled. All these machinations, instead of turning her heart against her lover, only served to rivet more closely the golden chain that bound them.

To elevate her betrothed husband to distinction was her chief desire. She had already created him Earl of Ross, and had promised to make him Duke of Albany; but the infatuated youth, presuming upon her complaisance, demanded that he should be proclaimed King after their public nuptials. The folly which prompted this demand was only exceeded by the weakness which ultimately granted it. On Sunday, 22nd July 1565, the banns of marriage were proclaimed, and on that day Darnley became Duke of Albany. A proclamation was issued on the following Saturday, ordaining that, in respect of the marriage, Darnley should be "namit and stylit King of this our Kingdome." This was an exercise of royal prerogative without parallel in the history of Scotland, since the approval of Parliament had neither been sought nor obtained. With Moray and the associate lords already in arms against her, nothing further was necessary to afford a plausible pretext for insurrection.

At six o'clock on Sunday morning, 29th July 1565, the marriage of Mary and Darnley took place in "the Chapel Royal of Holyrood House," according to Knox, meaning thereby the private chapel of the Queen. The bride was ushered into her place by the Earls of Lennox and Athol, who left her in the midst of her ladies that they might go and fetch the bridegroom. The etiquette of the Court of France required that, as Queen-

Dowager of that country, she should wear mourning upon State occasions until she had another husband. Consequently she was wedded in widow's weeds similar to those which she wore when Darnley first met her in France. At the appointed time Lennox and Athol marshalled the bridegroom to his place, and the sacred rite proceeded as prescribed by the Romish Church. The Bishop of Brechin pronounced his benediction over the Queen as fervently as did her uncle the Cardinal upon a former occasion—and with quite as unhappy a result. The die was cast! Mary Stuart had entered that dark cloud of misfortune which was to overshadow the rest of her life.

An amusing piece of theological statecraft took place immediately after the bridal. The Earl of Lennox was not sure which of the theologies then contending was to prevail, and knowing that much of Darnley's unpopularity arose from his connection with the Church of Rome, he counselled his son to retire from the Chapel with the Protestants at the conclusion of the ceremony, so as to avoid taking part in the Mass which followed. When the Romish rite was over he returned to claim his bride. The ancient custom prescribed that the wedded widow of France should be persuaded by her new husband to doff her mourning attire; and this was promptly accomplished, and the bride was

presented to her husband in robes suited to the occasion. Knox writes: "During the space of three or four days there was nothing but balling, and dancing, and banquetting." No stranger, introduced to those festivities, and judging from the appearance of the Court at Holyrood, would have supposed that the country was on the verge of civil war, which these rejoicings seemed likely to precipitate.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRAGEDY OF RICCIO

Stay, stay thee! sheathe that lifted steel!
O, thou art human and can feel!
Hear me! if e'er 'twas thine to prove
The blessing of a parent's love;
By thine own father's hoary hair,
By her who gave thee being, spare!
Did they not o'er thy infant years,
Keep watch, in sleepless hopes and fears?
Young warrior! thou wilt heed my prayers,
As thou wouldst hope for grace to theirs!

MRS HEMANS.

THE misfortunes of the newly-wedded couple began on the morning after the nuptials. The Protestant citizens of Edinburgh had gathered around Holyrood, and protested that the Mass should be abolished. Mary called the civic rulers into her presence, and pointed out that she only claimed the same liberty for herself as she had given frankly to her subjects. The Magistrates could not resist her persuasive eloquence, so they retired, and quelled the mob. Then Mary suffered another check. She summoned the nobles who had been at her marriage, and assembled them in the great hall at Holyrood, and there she caused the Lyon King of Arms to proclaim

Darnley as King, expecting that they would at once acclaim him. But the proclamation was received with ominous silence; and Darnley became indignant at the slight thus put upon him, and was inclined to blame the Queen for the insult, of which she was guiltless.

Moray and Argyll were now in open rebellion in the west, posing as Protestants who trembled for the safety of "the trew evangile," which was imperilled by the wedding of the Queen with a Romanist. It was not to be endured that Mary should be nominal ruler of the kingdom while these two noblemen were controlling the west country and putting her to defiance, so she resolved upon an Amazonian campaign. She summoned her loyal subjects to the muster, and on Sunday, 26th August — ere the honeymoon was over—Mary and Darnley set out at the head of five thousand men to put down the rebellion. She dressed herself in a suit of light mail, which covered her riding-dress, and Darnley appeared in all the glory of gilded armour. With Morton as leader and Lennox as commander the gallant army set forth. Meanwhile Moray and his comrades were at Ayr waiting on tardy help from Elizabeth; but that Queen was too astute to pledge herself beyond recall while there was a chance that the Protestant cause might not triumph, and she only sent a small pittance, quite inadequate for their purpose. The rebel

lords thought to steal a march upon the Queen's army, and on the Friday after her departure Moray, Chatelherault, Glencairn, and Rothes made a detour, and entered Edinburgh. Here, however, they found little support, and were constrained to depart when the guns of the Castle were turned upon them. They withdrew hastily to Dumfries, and the Queen's expected battle became a triumphal march through Linlithgow, Stirling, and Glasgow. Darnley led the Queen to his ancestral Castle of Crookston, near Paisley; and then the army returned to Edinburgh under the guidance of the royal pair, crowned with bloodless victory. Passing through Stirling and Fife on the way to the Capital, their appearance confirmed many waverers in loyalty to the Queen. Thus ended the first stage of the "Runabout Raid," as it was called.

This brilliant campaign astounded Elizabeth, and she hastened to explain that she had given no support to the rebel lords. Unfortunately for her reputation, the letter which she wrote to Bedford instructing him to give Moray a thousand pounds is still in existence, and convicts her of deliberate falsehood. Then the rebels had the hardihood to address a letter to Mary, protesting that they had only taken up arms in defence of the Protestant religion, and offering to return to their allegiance if she would restore their forfeited estates, replace them in their former

positions, permit them to choose the Council, expel all foreigners from the Court, and refrain from the use of the Mass! Surely there never was such an impudent letter addressed by rebels to a victorious sovereign! Mary resented it so much that she again assembled her army, and, accompanied by the King, set out for the Borders. At Biggar they found a vast array of eighteen thousand men assembled, and, uniting these forces, Mary marched into Dumfries, only to find that her enemies had ignominiously fled to England, to seek protection where they had found support. Another triumphal march led the victorious Queen through the Border counties back to Edinburgh.

Mary had hardly returned in all the flush of victory ere disputes began between her and her consort. He was evidently an ornamental King, useful for State pageants, but quite unable to initiate a policy or carry through a scheme discreetly, and Mary found that the chief care of the kingdom was once more thrown upon her shoulders. She turned her attention to the Borders, which had long been in an unsettled state, and she looked around for one who might be trusted to rule that region with the needful strong hand.

Amongst the Border nobles no one was more powerful than James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell. His bold and daring character, his easy morality, even his very rudeness, made him a model free-

booter, ready for any exploit, from cattle-reiving to regicide. He had led a turbulent life for several years before, and had evidently no moral scruples. In 1559 he intercepted money that was being sent from England to assist the Lords of the Congregation; and he had been at feud with Arran for some time ere Knox brought about a shallow truce in 1562. Then Bothwell revealed to Arran a plot to seize Mary, to kill Moray and Lethington, and to rule all Scotland under Arran; but that crazy nobleman made this insane plot known to Moray, and Bothwell was apprehended, and lodged as a prisoner in Edinburgh Castle. He made his escape, and became a wanderer, dwelling now in England and anon in France. The revelation which Mary had lately received of Moray's character had produced a strange revulsion in her bosom, and with that exaggeration of sentiment often found in impulsive natures she allowed herself to be driven to the opposite extreme, and believed that all the enemies of Moray were naturally her friends. She thought that she would secure her throne by enlisting his foes on her side — a dangerous theory, for which she afterwards paid dearly. Bothwell was recalled to Court, his outlawry cancelled, and compensation promised him for such of his lands as had passed from his control.

This action, though possibly indiscreet and

fraught with danger to herself, must have appeared sound policy both to the Queen and her counsellors. It transformed a powerful enemy into a friend, and there was erected a formidable barrier between England and Scotland when Bothwell was appointed Lieutenant of the Marches. But the King had not looked with favour on this appointment. He proposed that his father, the Earl of Lennox, should have the office; but Mary was obdurate, and would not be moved from her resolution. Hence began a series of petty matrimonial squabbles, which made life at the Court almost unbearable. The position is thus described by Randolph, the English Ambassador, in a letter to Cecil:

"This also shall not be unknown to you, what jars had already risen between her and her husband; she to have her will one way, and he another; he to have his father Lieutenant-General, and she to have the Earl of Bothwell; he to have this man preferred, and she another."

To a woman with Mary's penetration the mere bestowal or withholding of an office must have seemed a trifle compared with the revelation of the incapacity of her husband to rule the land over which she had made him King. The idol which she had erected for herself she now found to be neither of precious gold nor even enduring brass, but a miserable counterfeit in clay.

The insurgent lords had fled to the English

Court, but there they found scant welcome. Their failure had set Elizabeth against them, and she feared they might reveal her duplicity to Mary. Hence when Moray sought audience of Elizabeth he was astonished to find himself repeatedly repulsed. At length the French Ambassador, De Foix, obtained access for Moray to the august presence, and judge of his astonishment when Elizabeth broke out upon him with reproaches that "he, a rebel to her sister of Scotland, durst take the boldness to come into her realm." There is no one who bears ingratitude with a worse grace than he who has himself been ungrateful, and Moray was astounded at Elizabeth's attitude. He endeavoured to remonstrate with her, and to declare that she had promised aid to him by letters in her own handwriting. Yet Elizabeth compelled Moray and his comrade, the Abbot of Kilwinning, "to confess on their knees, in the presence of the French and Spanish Ambassadors, that she had never moved them to that opposition and resistance to their Sovereign's marriage." And, lest his confession in the Scottish language should not be intelligible to the foreign ambassadors, she forced Moray to repeat it after her in halting French.

"Now," cried Elizabeth when they had finished their confession, "ye have told the truth, for neither did I, nor any in my name, stir ye up against your Queen, for your abominable treason might serve for example to move my own subjects

to rebel against me. Therefore pack you out of my presence; ye are but unworthy traitors!"

And then this royal prevaricator wrote an effusive account of the scene to Mary, saying: "I could have wished that your ears had been judges to hear both the honour and affection which I manifested towards you, to the complete disproof of what is stated, that I defended your rebel subjects against you." And Mary, glad to find that there was any point of agreement betwixt them, received this letter with joy. But how had Moray and the Abbot brought themselves to confess what they knew to be untrue? Melville explains it when he narrates that Elizabeth "had promised anew to help and assist them to the uttermost of her power, with condition that they would please her so far as to sit down upon their knees in presence of the said Ambassadors, and make the foresaid false confessions." Let there be no mistake made. This forsworn rebel is the very personage who exists in Scottish history under the name of "the Good Regent Moray."

Not content with the high position given to him, Darnley's ambition tempted him to demand further honours. He insisted that Mary should arrange that the crown should be secured to him in event of her decease without leaving an heir—no unlikely occurrence in view of the state of her health. But Mary had seen enough of his character to know that such an arrangement might be

fatal for her country—nay, possibly fatal to herself—at a time when the "removal" of an obstacle was a common political occurrence, and she delayed the fulfilment of her promise, if promise she had made. Unable to comprehend her discretion in this matter, Darnley cast about for a cause; it was not long before some of his subtle friends saw an opportunity of raising strife in the royal household. They directed attention to the close intimacy which existed between Mary and David Riccio, and by dubious hints and mysterious reticence they inflamed his jealousy. Hitherto a fast friendship had existed between the King and the "Seigneur Davie," as he was called; but "whispering tongues can poison truth," and men like Darnley, when once their passions are aroused, do not reason calmly. The scholar and musician, whose companionship he had formerly prized, was now cast forth from his society, and darkly frowned upon by him who was Riccio's deepest debtor.

Various theories have been framed to account for this alteration in their relations. One author declares that it was caused by the refusal of Riccio to join with Darnley in some of his dissolute and intemperate escapades; while another attributes it, more reasonably, to the notion entertained by Darnley that Riccio had advised the Queen against granting his request for the crown. The scandal, put in circulation first by the English Ambassador

Randolph, within a month of Mary's marriage, that she was already criminally intimate with Riccio, may be dismissed as malicious slander. The same Randolph, at the same time, accused her of a similar sin with Bothwell, though that was manifestly impossible. Upon this point Andrew Lang remarks: "That a woman should have so many passions in so short a space of time seems almost beyond possibility, unless Mary was a Messalina, which is not proved, or probable." The likeliest cause of Riccio's condemnation is that he was suspected to be a secret emissary of the Pope, commissioned to restore, at all hazards, the old religion; and the Scottish lords could easily work upon Darnley's folly to make him believe anything. The crafty Earl of Moray, by elliptical phrases and mysterious allusions, led Randolph to suppose that he knew some dread secret about Mary which was the cause of her animosity, more than fear of his ambition.

Morton, Ruthven, Lindsay, and others of the insurgent lords who had not taken refuge in England, gained Darnley's ear, and proposed that Riccio should be removed by assassination, provided Darnley would ensure them protection and pardon after the deed. A regular conspiracy was formed, with the double purpose of imprisoning the Queen and murdering Riccio; and two bonds were prepared, which the conspirators signed—Darnley's conditions being "that they would pro-

cure for him the crown-matrimonial of Scotland, and that in event of the Queen's death he should be declared her rightful successor, and his father after him." It seems likely that Elizabeth knew of the proposed imprisonment of the Queen and the murder of Riccio about a month before the tragedy took place, but she dropped no hint of warning to her "dearly beloved cousin."

The Parliament was opened by the Queen on Thursday, 7th March 1565-6, and it seemed likely that Moray and his confederates would be declared traitors when the next meeting took place. It was needful to move at once with the murder of Riccio. On Saturday, 9th March, the first blow was struck at the power of the Queen. In the gloaming a body of armed men, about five hundred in number, silently surrounded Holyrood. Morton, who was in attendance on the Queen, traitorously admitted a large number of men-at-arms to the courtyard, and then locked the gates, and went to join his comrades in Darnley's apartments. These were on the basement floor, and a secret stair communicated with the Queen's apartments above. The conspirators were Morton; Lindsay of the Byres, who was married to Moray's sister; George Douglas, uncle by courtesy of Darnley; and Ruthven, uncle by marriage, as he had married a sister of Darnley's mother. They were all men whose past lives made them least fit to avenge unchastity or conjugal infidelity.

The Queen was in delicate health, and had retired to her apartment in company with Jean, Countess of Argyll; Lord Robert Stuart, Mary's illegitimate brother; Beaton of Creich, one of the Masters of her Household; Arthur Erskine, her equerry; and David Riccio, the unsuspecting victim. In the small cabinet off her bed-chamber, still pointed out in Holyrood, supper had been set out for this party, and they were seated quietly when, at seven o'clock, Darnley entered the chamber unannounced. The scene that followed has been often described both in poetry and prose.

It was evident to Mary that Darnley had been drinking to excess, but this was too common an occurrence to rouse her suspicions. He approached her, threw his arms around her, and imprinted a Judas kiss upon her cheek. She asked if he had supped, and he replied that he thought she would have finished her supper, thus seeking to excuse his entrance. No further words were necessary: he had delayed long enough to permit his confederates to come up the stair. The tapestry over the secret door was lifted, and the ghastly face of Ruthven appeared — an invalid who had risen from his sick-bed to perpetrate a foul murder. He was partially armed, and held a sword in his hand. Mary was startled, but retained her composure, and spoke in a kindly way to Ruthven.

"My lord," she said, "I was coming to visit you in your chamber, having been told that you were very ill, and now you come here in armour. What does this mean?"

"I have been very ill," he replied, seating himself unceremoniously, "but I am well enough to come here for your good."

"And what good can you do me?" she said. "You come not in the fashion of one who meaneth well."

"There is no harm intended your Grace," he answered, "nor to any other but yonder poltroon, Davie; it is he with whom I have to speak."

"What hath he done?" asked the Queen, fearing that Ruthven's malady had affected his brain.

"Ask the King, your husband, madam," was the curt reply.

Mary turned to Darnley for an explanation; but he only shook his head in a drunken fashion, and declared he knew nothing of the matter. The Queen knew that Ruthven could not have come up the secret stair without Darnley's connivance; but she affected indignation, and ordered Ruthven to withdraw. That was not his purpose. He staggered around the small chamber, waving his sword, and threatening any who would lay hands on him. Meanwhile the other conspirators came crowding up the stair, with their weapons unsheathed.

"What does this mean?" she cried. "Do you seek my life?"

"No, madam," answered Ruthven; "but we will have out yonder villain, Davie," pointing his sword at Riccio, as if for a deadly thrust.

Mary's dauntless spirit was now aroused. She seized Ruthven's arm, and directed his sword upwards, throwing herself between him and Riccio. The trembling Secretary had taken refuge in the embrasure of the window; while the Queen turned to the intruders, and demanded what they had to charge against Riccio, promising that he should be arraigned if they had aught to accuse him of, and all should have justice.

"Here is that will do him justice!" said one, showing a rope; for Knox declares that "they first purposed to hang him, and had provided cords for the same purpose."

"Madam," whispered Riccio to the Queen, "I am a dead man!"

"Fear not," she replied, turning to her husband, "the King will never suffer you to be slain in my presence, neither can he forget your faithful services."

Darnley, however, saw too late that the conspirators meant to make him the scapegoat for their crime, and the thought of the former friendship of the man whose murder he had planned made him speechless. The ruffian band knew too well that the Queen would never pardon the

outrage they had committed, and they must complete the deed, and make Darnley an active accomplice. The Queen must be taken out of the way, and Darnley must do it.

"Sir," said Ruthven sneeringly, "take the Queen, your wife and Sovereign, to you." And Darnley placed his arms around her to restrain her indignation.

The other conspirators in the courtyard began to fear from the delay that the plot had miscarried, and Morton summoned them to follow him up the fatal staircase. They clustered in the bed-chamber, and hustled tumultuously into the small cabinet, regardless of decorum. The table with the supper was upset, and fell against the Queen, bruising her severely; and Lady Argyll caught a falling candle, and saved the place from conflagration. Her faithless husband's attempt to seize her made Mary more violent than ever. She turned with scorn upon him, reproached him for his duplicity and cowardice, and then, asserting herself as Queen, she ordered the turbulent crowd of assassins to depart, as traitors and villains, saying she would protect Riccio with her own person.

"We will have out that gallant!" shouted Ruthven, driven to desperation by her attitude; and Mary took up her place in front of the window, to shield Riccio, and faced her assailants boldly.

"Let him go, madam," cried Darnley; "they will not harm him"—though he knew that the assassins, having gone so far, must finish their murderous work.

"Save my life, madam!" Riccio implored, clinging in terror to the skirts of the Queen. Vain were her commands and entreaties to stay the bloodthirsty mob. George Douglas, eager to end the scene, thrust at Riccio over the Queen's shoulder with such rude violence that the Secretary's blood stained her robe. Then ensued a dastardly attack on Riccio. It seemed as if those who held back before were anxious to share in the crime after the first blow had been struck. And the coward King, himself roused to excitement, tore Mary's robe from Riccio's dispairing grasp, and placed her in a chair, pinioning her arms by clasping her body in a traitorous embrace. Mary now began to suspect that the blow was intended for her as well as her Secretary. Ker of Faudonside (she declared afterwards) held his pistol to her side, and growled that he would shoot her dead if she offered any resistance.

"Fire!" she cried indignantly, "if you respect not the royal infant in my womb." Even Darnley dare not countenance this deed, and he struck Ker's weapon aside, though not before the trigger had been drawn. But for the tardiness of the flint-spark Mary might have been spared years of misery.

The assassins now went rapidly to work. The actual events in so stirring a tragedy have been variously narrated; but it seems most probable that Riccio was not slain in the Queen's presence, but dragged by the infuriated mob through the Queen's bed-chamber towards the main staircase, with many a sword-thrust upon his person. His piteous cries for mercy reached the Queen as she sat pinioned by her faithless husband in the chair, and though she heard his frantic shrieks she was powerless to aid him.

"Ah! poor Dauvit, my faithful servant!" she cried. "May the Lord have mercy on your soul!"

To make Darnley an accomplice in the murder, his uncle, George Douglas, returned to the cabinet, violently plucked the King's dagger from his girdle, and, rushing out again, plunged the dagger into Riccio's bleeding corpse, saying: "This is the blow of the King!" and left the jewelled weapon in the body as a proof of Darnley's complicity. The horrible plot against Riccio had been successful; but retribution was yet to come.

CHAPTER X

REGICIDE

I am hare-hearted, for
The hunters are upon me. There—and there—
I hear them questing. I shall die, man—die,
And never see the sun more ; ay, this hour
Will they come in and slay me.

SWINBURNE.

WHEN the rabble rout had withdrawn from the Queen's cabinet to execute their bloody work they had turned the key upon Darnley and his wife. In vain she sought indignantly for an explanation of the outrage, but he strove to calm her hysterical sorrow by impotent assurances that "no harm was intended." Not until one of the attendants came and announced, in reply to Mary's question, that Riccio was dead did the full measure of the King's wickedness appear to her, and she reproached him for his perfidy. Overcome by emotion she sank into a deadly swoon, and when she regained consciousness she found she was a prisoner in the hands of the murderers. Darnley also discovered that his fellow-conspirators had so little faith in him that they would not let him go free. And then

Ruthven returned, and bluntly informed Mary that the rebel lords had been recalled by Darnley, and "would return on the morrow" to take part with the murderers of Riccio against her.

The day succeeding the murder witnessed the meeting of Moray and his sister in Holyrood. Again she was the victim of her impulses. She had discarded Moray when she found that he meditated evil against Darnley, but now when she met him she experienced a revulsion of feeling. Throwing herself into his arms she embraced and kissed him, pouring forth complaints as to the treatment she had received. "Oh! my brother!" she cried, "had you been here you never would have allowed me to be so cruelly handled."

Moray sympathised with her, and professed the most ardent devotion to her cause. Then he went out, and joined his fellow-conspirators, declaring to them that "they had gone too far to recede with safety, for they could expect no grace from the Queen; therefore it behoved them to take such measures as the laws of self-preservation prescribed." They had both the Queen and Darnley in their power. The road seemed easy for Moray to attain the highest place if he kept the rebels on his side.

Darnley soon saw that he had lost alike the Queen and his comrades in the murder. It

became necessary for him to bring about at least an apparent reconciliation. After an hour or two of tearful penitence at Mary's feet he arranged a meeting with Mary, Moray, Morton, and Ruthven, and persuaded her to receive them graciously. Then he prevailed upon her captors to leave the Queen in his charge, and to withdraw the men-at-arms placed in guard over her. In the debate that night betwixt Mary and her husband she convinced him that the confederate lords could not be trusted, and she proposed a plan of escape, to which he readily agreed. At an early hour of the morning the King and Queen arose, and dressed hastily, and leaving the Palace by a secret stair they found themselves in the cemetery of Holyrood. Sir William Standon, the King's Master of the Horse, was in waiting with his charger, and Arthur Erskine had provided a palfrey with a pillion for the Queen, and a few horses for the attendants. In the grey dawn they quietly and speedily took their way to Seton House, where Lord Seton met them with two hundred men-at-arms, and they were conveyed safely to the sea-beaten Castle of Dunbar. Here they were joined by Huntly and Bothwell, with thirteen hundred horsemen, and Mary soon found an army of eight thousand men at her command.

Moray and his confederates heard of this move with terror and dismay. Their slanders against the Queen and their murder of Riccio had set

the people against them, and they knew they could not give battle with any chance of success; and when the Governor of the Castle declared that he would fire upon the town if they did not depart from it they knew their cause was hopeless. For a second time Moray and his followers had to leave Edinburgh without striking a blow in defence of their pretensions. They sent Lord Sempill to Dunbar to beseech the Queen to pardon them, as she had promised; but she refused to implement a promise that had been extorted under fear of death. The confederacy then broke up, individual members making personal application for the Queen's mercy. Morton, Ruthven, George Douglas, Lindsay of the Byres, and Ker of Faudonside fled to Newcastle; and Lethington found safety in Dunkeld. Darnley was earnest in his demand that they should all be taken and executed, for the obvious reason that they had proofs of his duplicity in their hands. But Mary took a more moderate view. She sent privately to Moray, offering to pardon him if he would break away from his associates and join her party. This offer he accepted eagerly, solemnly declaring that he would have nothing more to do with them. His pardon was signed, and ten days afterwards he specially commended the rebels to Cecil as "his dear friends," and besought Elizabeth's protection for them.

The peace betwixt Darnley and Mary was destined to be of short duration. She treated him as one who had been a puppet in the hands of designing men. The royal party remained at Dunbar only five days; but ere they reached Haddington a rupture had taken place between them. And when they returned to Edinburgh, at the head of a gallant army, there was less love betwixt the King and Queen than when they made their escape from Holyrood. Darnley even made overtures to Moray and Argyll for a new plot to dethrone the Queen; but even these unscrupulous men would have no dealings with him.

With mingled feelings, Mary prepared for her expected confinement. It was decided that the Castle of Edinburgh would be the safest place for the birth of a successor to the crown; and here apartments were prepared for her, the Earl of Mar being Governor, and Moray superintending all the arrangements. Darnley, piqued at being thus slighted, withdrew to Holyrood, thus playing into the hands of his enemies; for had Mary died in child-bed Moray and Mar might have kept the heir to the crown, and ruled Scotland in his name. In view of her approaching critical condition Mary made a will, and though the document has not been found, its contents are indicated by the holograph notes which she made on the inventory of her jewels. Among the legatees whom she designed to be recipients of

souvenirs are Moray and Argyll, the quondam rebels; Huntly and Bothwell, as yet true to her; the Countess of Lennox, then in prison for her sake; and the Earl of Lennox, who had plotted to deprive her of life. To Joseph Riccio, the brother and successor of the murdered David, she bequeathed certain jewels which she had received from her defunct Secretary. The bequests to Darnley included a diamond ring enamelled in red, and against the entry of this jewel she wrote: "It was with this that I was married; I leave it to the King, who gave it to me."

At length the eventful hour arrived which had been anticipated with such diverse feelings by the nation. "On Wednesday, 19th of June 1566, between nine and ten o'clock in the morning," Mary gave birth to a son, after passing through a period of severe mental and physical suffering. The announcement was received with joy by the nation, who expected that the new-born heir would live to unite the crowns of Scotland and England. This was an event which should have drawn together the estranged husband and wife; but Darnley was obdurate. He did not dare to repeat the slanders against his wife which might have made the child illegitimate, nor did he seek to repudiate paternity. He only asked the Queen that she would forget and forgive. Mary had proved over and over again that she could forgive; it was not so easy to forget.

MARY STUART AND HER SON

From an engraving published in 1578

Mary experienced a period of lassitude after the birth of her son, and she seems to have fallen more completely under the power of Moray, whose purpose was to prevent a reconciliation with Darnley. It was needful that Moray should have the support of some of his former confederates, and he succeeded in bringing back Lethington to the Queen's favour. But Bothwell, who had risked his life for the Queen against Moray and his fellow-rebels, was "stieve and dour," and not so easily brought under Moray's control. Had Darnley combined with Bothwell at this time against those nearest the Queen's person she might have been more secure; but Darnley now distrusted everyone, feared for his own life, and actually made preparations to leave the country, but was dissuaded by his father from this insane project. Lethington obtained the long-coveted place of Secretary, and he and Moray soon filled every important office with their myrmidons. Darnley prudently withdrew to his father's domains in the west of Scotland.

The disordered state of the Borders again called for attention; and Mary, despite the weak state of her health, determined to make a personal progress to the disturbed locality, taking her husband with her. But Darnley dallied over the matter, would neither consent nor refuse, and at last, on 8th October 1566, she had to set out alone. Bothwell was on the Border as Lieu-

tenant of the Marches, and was wounded in a skirmish. While Mary was at Jedburgh she was advised by her counsellors to visit Bothwell, who was confined by his wound to his chamber at Hermitage Castle. Her accusers, taking Buchanan as their authority, have alleged that Mary had conducted herself sinfully with Bothwell in the Exchequer House at Edinburgh on the 24th of September—about a fortnight before—and maintain that her visit to Hermitage was the result, not of gratitude to her wounded Lieutenant, but of guilty love for Bothwell. If so, it is strange that on this amorous expedition she should have taken with her the principal lords and ladies of the Court, including Moray, and that she "conferred with Bothwell in the presence of her Council for a couple of hours." These are not the usual conditions of royal amours.

Mary's visit to the Borders was destined to prove of great danger to herself. On the day after her return from Hermitage to Jedburgh she was seized with severe sickness, — apparently, from the descriptions given, an intermittent fever, brought on by over-exertion in her then weak condition. For some time her life was despaired of, and she summoned the lords to her bedside, and took farewell of them, committing her infant son to their charge, and forgiving her enemies. With what she believed was her dying breath she counselled those around her to maintain

religious toleration, as she had endeavoured to do, saying that "she had never persecuted one of her subjects on the score of religion." Her words were probably beyond the comprehension of those who heard them.

Darnley was diverting his mind at Glasgow during the time of the Queen's illness; but her critical state demanded his presence, and he arrived tardily at Jedburgh. As her life was still in danger—or perhaps because Moray did not wish them to be reconciled—he was not permitted to share her apartments, and he left in high dudgeon. Mary recovered more rapidly than might have been expected, and she prolonged her absence from the capital by making easy stages thither by Kelso, Hume, Berwick, Halidon Hill, Eyemouth, Coldingham, Dunbar, Tantallon, and Craigmillar. On 20th November 1566 she arrived at Craigmillar Castle, nearly two months after her departure from Edinburgh, and here Darnley joined her some three days afterwards. They were still far from a union of hearts. Du Croc, the French Ambassador, thus wrote on 2nd December to Archbishop Beaton:

"The Queen is for the present at Craigmillar, about a league distant from this city [Edinburgh]. She is in the hands of the physicians, and, I do assure you, is not at all well. I do believe the principal part of her disease to consist of a

deep grief and sorrow, nor does it seem possible to make her forget the same. Still she repeats these words: 'I could wish to be dead.'"

Finding that he could make no way in regaining the Queen's affections Darnley withdrew indignantly from Craigmillar, and took up his old quarters at Stirling. No sooner had he gone than Lethington began insidiously to play upon Mary's feelings, and to suggest that some means should be found to relieve her of the King's unwelcome presence.

At Kelso Mary had uttered some indiscreet words when incensed against her husband. She there received some letters from Darnley, and it is recorded by Calderwood that "when she had read them before the Earl of Moray, the Earl of Huntly, and the Secretary she professed plainly that, unless she was freed of him some way, she could have no pleasure to live; and if she could find no other remedy, she should put hand into herself," implying suicide as the only alternative. Acting upon this passionate utterance Lethington, at Craigmillar, suggested that Moray and his friends should press for a divorce. These two visited the bedroom of Argyll, and induced him to join them, and it was then easy to win over Huntly and his brother-in-law, Bothwell. These five lords, who represented both the Protestant and Catholic parties, made their way to Mary's chamber, to

acquaint her with the proposal. She was too clever to flout these nobles at once by a refusal, so she temporised, pleading that a divorce might prejudice her son's succession. They disposed of this objection, and then she flatly refused to have any divorce.

"Peradventure he may change," she said, "and it were better that I myself for a time passed into France, and abode there till he acknowledged him himself."

To this Lethington replied that they could surely manage so slight a matter as preserving her son's claim to the throne. "Albeit," said he, "my Lord of Moray here present be little less scrupulous for a Protestant than your Grace is for a Papist, I am assured he will look through his fingers thereto, and behold our doings, and say nothing to the same." But Mary would not listen to this proposal, and commanded them to do nothing to injure her honour or conscience. To which Lethington replied: "Let us guide the matter amongst us, and your Grace shall see nothing but good, and approved by Parliament." He probably intended to propose an impeachment of Darnley for illegally dismissing Parliament upon his own authority, but to this she would not listen.

These determined men, however, were not to be diverted from their purpose by the scruples of a weak woman. There is little reason to

doubt that at Craigmillar a bond was drawn up providing for the assassination of the King, and signed by nearly all the conspirators. Only from various sources, which do not always agree, are their names discovered. They were Huntly, Argyll, Lethington, Sir James Balfour, and, it is stated, Moray—though probably, if Moray followed his usual cautious course, he would not sign, but give a verbal assent. In this bond it was stated: "That it was thought expedient, and most profitable for the common weal of the whole nobility, especially the lords undersigned, that such a young fool and proud tyrant should not reign nor bear rule over them, and that for divers causes they had concluded that he should be taken off by one way or other, and they also agreed to defend and fortify whosoever should take the deed in hand to do it, for it should be everyone's action, reckoned and holden as if done by themselves."

It has been alleged that Mary knew of this bond and approved of the proposal. If so, then she must be held guilty, art and part, in the murder of Darnley; but the evidence is by no means clear enough to procure a conviction. Surely, if Mary refused to consider the proposal for a divorce, she would have more scruples in accepting a plan which involved cold-blooded murder. There can be little doubt that the conspirators intended to murder the King, depose

the Queen, and rule the country by a regency during the Prince's minority; and, curiously enough, all these events occurred. Yet not one of these disastrous results of the Craigmillar bond could ever have been desired by the Queen.

Mary returned to Edinburgh, and set about preparing for the baptism of the infant Prince, which took place at Stirling on 17th December 1566, with suitable pomp, according to the rites of the Romish Church. Darnley was then living at Stirling; but he took part neither in the baptism nor the festivities, and it is alleged that Bothwell had the whole management of the ceremonies. Darnley was not allowed to appear, it is stated, because his attire was unsuitable; and the English and Scottish nobles were instructed, according to one account, to deny to him the honours of his kingly state. Disgusted with this neglect, Darnley left Stirling for Glasgow. He fell sick on the way, and at once took to bed at Glasgow, his illness proving to be small-pox, though poison was suspected. His departure had, most likely, been expedited by the knowledge that the exiled lords, with Morton at their head, had been pardoned for the murder of Riccio, and restored to their estates. As these men knew Darnley's complicity in that ghastly deed he felt it safer to be out of the way.

While Darnley was lying sick unto death at Glasgow Mary's accusers maintain that she was

gaily passing the time at various country seats in the neighbourhood of Stirling, in company with Bothwell, "for the worst purposes." It is certain, however, that she twice proposed to visit Darnley at Glasgow, and was rudely repulsed. Learning that Lennox had framed a plot to capture the infant Prince, imprison the Queen, and rule the land as Regent, she hastily retired to Holyrood, but there she found that the alleged plot was a device of Moray to incense her against Darnley. On 20th January Mary left Edinburgh to join her husband at Glasgow, and arrived there on 22nd January. If one knew what took place between Mary and Darnley in that sick-chamber one of the great mysteries of Mary's career would be solved. Did she, while hypocritically tending her invalid husband, write the famous Casket Letters and Sonnets, and send them to Bothwell, professing a guilty love for that daring nobleman, and plainly hinting at a plot for removing Darnley? There are many students of Mary's life who have decided against her chiefly because of these Casket Letters, and their authenticity has been fiercely debated. Their bearing upon the question of the guilt or innocence of Mary may be considered when that event is narrated in which they were brought in evidence against her. Here it is sufficient to state that the Glasgow meeting between Mary and Darnley was but a repetition of many previous

encounters — petitions for pardon on his part, and the further extension of grace and forgiveness on hers.

Mary was shocked at the state in which she found Darnley. The smallpox had been of a peculiarly virulent type, and though his handsome face had not been greatly marred by it, his flowing locks had entirely disappeared. Ere she had left Edinburgh she had directed that apartments should be prepared for him at Craigmillar Castle, where she had herself spent days of convalescence. It is important to note this fact, for, as Darnley never went to Craigmillar, his course must have been ordered by some other person than the Queen. She had brought a litter with her, so that he might be transported to Craigmillar in the easiest manner.

Lennox, meanwhile, had not been idle. He placed one of his own creatures, Captain Thomas Crawford of Jordanhill, as a spy upon the royal pair, his instructions being to object to every proposition made by the Queen, and to suggest a sinister motive for the most innocent action. He objected to Craigmillar Castle, and suggested Holyrood, though the former was clearly the more suitable spot. Who proposed Kirk o' Field, near Edinburgh, on the site of the present University? The place was described by George Buchanan as "ane hous whilum of auld priestis, among graves, between the ruynes of twa tem-

pillis, itself also ruynous, neir to the theifis hant, and itself ane resetter of theifis, not far from the fort and garrisoun of his [Darnley's] enemies, that stude over against the dure, the whilk gif ony man suld flie out he culd not eschaip their traterous ambushement."

Surely this was not a spot likely to be chosen by one invalid for the convalescence of another. But who suggested this as a substitute for Craigmillar? Not the Queen, not Lennox, but the conspirators around the throne who had determined upon Darnley's removal. Lethington had succeeded in persuading Sir James Balfour, then Governor of Edinburgh Castle, to join in the plot against the King, and it was not difficult to bring Balfour's brother, Robert Balfour, Provost of Kirk o' Field, into the conspiracy. No small-pox patient would be allowed to enter the city; but here was this ruinous house outside the walls, and it would be no serious loss to blow it to atoms, and the undesired King along with it. There seems to be every probability that Mary set out from Glasgow with Darnley, intending to take him to Craigmillar, and that it was the will of her husband, and at the suggestion of the conspirators, that he deviated to Kirk o' Field, where he arrived on 31st January. Finding that the house had not been furnished in a manner suitable for her Court the Queen caused certain articles to be brought thither from Holyrood.

At first she was accustomed to retire to Holyrood every night; but upon his entreaty she consented to have a bedroom fitted up for herself near his own, and they resumed, as far as might be, their former relationship of husband and wife.

Though the conspirators had determined to remove Darnley they still hesitated as to how they were to accomplish their purpose. Bothwell's plan was to set upon him in the hunting field, and despatch him in open day, but accident caused them to revert to their first intention to blow up the house with gunpowder. Lord Robert Stuart, the illegitimate brother of Mary, privately informed Darnley that there was a plot in existence for his removal, and counselled him to leave Kirk o' Field if he wished to escape alive. Darnley told the Queen of this matter, and she summoned Lord Robert to the King's chamber, and, in the presence of Moray, demanded an explanation. But Lord Robert, fearful lest he had prejudiced himself with Moray, stoutly denied that he had ever spoken such words to Darnley, and so fired the King with indignation at his duplicity that an armed encounter seemed imminent, and the Queen had to call upon Moray to separate them. This dispute hastened Darnley's end.

Moray had completed his plans, and remitted all to Bothwell, and then conveniently found that his wife was ill in Fife, so that he might

withdraw thither, and thus provide an alibi. Bothwell caused a large quantity of gunpowder to be brought from Dunbar Castle and deposited at Holyrood, recklessly avoiding concealment. Early on the morning of Sunday, 9th February, he caused his kinsman, Hepburn of Bowton, who had brought the powder from Dunbar, to go to Kirk o' Field, and there receive the explosive, and place it in Mary's chamber, the key of which he had obtained from Nicholas Hubert (known as "French Paris"), then the Queen's Chamberlain, whom he had bought over. Mary had remained at Holyrood in the early part of Sunday to be present at the double marriage of Margaret Cawood, her maid, and Sebastian Paiges, her Master of the Revels, both of whom had assisted her to escape after Riccio's murder. She then withdrew to the house of the Bishop of Argyll, where she had ordered preparations to be made for a banquet to the Count Moretta, the Ambassador of Savoy, who was to depart on the following day. Thence she proceeded to Kirk o' Field about seven o'clock in the evening, with her nobles, to hold a miniature Court that might gratify her husband, intending to return to Holyrood for the ball and masque to be given to the newly-married couples. Mary's stay at Kirk o' Field was thus much later than Bothwell had expected, and his minions were actually placing the powder in her apartment while she was in

the room above taking an affectionate farewell of her husband. Bothwell could not proceed with his purpose until she had gone.

At length, after taking a valuable ring from her finger and placing it on that of Darnley, the Queen took leave of him, and set out for Holyrood, accompanied by her nobles, Bothwell being among them. He speedily retired to his chamber, changed his attire, and went back to Kirk o' Field to superintend operations. Hardly had the Queen retired to rest ere an explosion occurred, about two o'clock in the morning of 10th February, as though caused by the discharge of thirty cannon. Bothwell was the first to announce some incoherent account of the catastrophe, and the Queen at once ordered out the guards, and despatched them, with Bothwell at their head, to bring tidings of the affair to Holyrood. When they arrived at Kirk o' Field they found the Provost's house had become a total ruin. The bodies of two of the King's servants were found among the debris, and the sole survivor, Thomas Nelson, was with difficulty rescued alive. But no trace could be found of the King, and it was late in the afternoon of Monday ere his body was discovered, at a considerable distance from the ruins, and outside the enclosing wall. His servant, William Taylor, lay dead beside him. It was evident from the appearance of the bodies that they had not perished by the explosion: the prevailing notion at the

time was that Darnley and his servant had been attacked in the house, and strangled, and their bodies carried to the spot where they were ultimately found. The murderers, it was supposed, then returned to the house, and fired the train which caused the explosion, thinking in this clumsy way to hide their wicked deed. It matters little how the action was accomplished; it was "murder most foul and most unnatural," which could not fail to rebound upon the perpetrators and instigators. Thus was terminated ingloriously the brief career of Henry Darnley, ere he had completed his twenty-first year.

CHAPTER XI

DUNBAR AND LOCHLEVEN

I'll not call you tyrant;
But this most cruel usage of your Queen
(Not able to produce more accusation
Than your own weak-hing'd fancy) something savours
Of tyranny, and will ignoble make you;
Yea, scandalous to the world.

SHAKESPEARE.

EVENTS moved rapidly with Mary Stuart after the dread event which made her a widow for the second time. Immediately after the discovery of the body of Darnley a proclamation was issued by the Queen, offering "a reward of £2000 and a pension for life to whomsoever would reveal and bring to justice the person or persons by whom the horrible and treasonable murder had been committed." But the bribe, apparently, was not sufficient to tempt the assassins to betray each other, though various placards were put up in Edinburgh plainly accusing Bothwell of the deed. Upon 15th February Darnley was buried in the royal vault of the Chapel of Holyrood, beside his father-in-law and predecessor, James V.—another added to the melancholy list of Stuart kings who had met death in a violent manner.

Mary's health suffered so severely at this agitating period that she was desired by the Council, under medical advice, to seek change of air, and she withdrew to Seton Castle, near Edinburgh. The conducting of affairs of State thus devolved upon Bothwell, Argyll, Huntly, and Lethington. Rumours were circulated implicating Mary in the plot for her husband's overthrow, and the people were incited to rebel against the rule of a Romanist and murderess. The Earl of Lennox came before the nation as the avenger of his son's death, and joined in a secret bond with Moray, Morton, and Athol, with the purpose of deposing the Queen and gaining possession of the Prince. Only Bothwell and Huntly remained free from this new treason, and sided with the Queen; and it soon became evident that the contest for power lay between Moray and Bothwell.

Elizabeth was a potent enemy of Bothwell, who had refused her proffered bribes; while the complaisant Moray, who had cringed to her, became her favourite when she had to decide between them. It is not impossible that she knew the reason which had brought about the union between Moray and his associates, for Randolph kept her well informed as to the movements in Scotland. But it suited Elizabeth's purpose to believe that Bothwell and Mary had been associated in Darnley's murder, and she plainly made the

accusation in a letter which she wrote to Mary, in which the following passage occurs:—

"MADAM,—My ears have been so shocked, my mind distressed, and my heart appalled, at hearing the horrible report of the abominable murder of your husband, my slaughtered cousin, that I have scarcely as yet spirits to write about it; but although nature constrains me to lament his death, so near to me as in blood he was, I must tell you boldly that I am far more concerned for you than I am for him. Oh! Madam, I should neither perform the office of a faithful cousin, nor that of an affectionate friend, if I studied rather to please your ears than to preserve your honour; therefore I will not conceal from you that people, for the most part, say 'that you will look through your fingers at this deed, instead of revenging it,' and that you have not cared to touch those who have done you this pleasure, as if the deed had not been without the murderers having had that assurance."

However anxious to bring the murderers to justice Mary's power was limited. The leading members of her Council were concerned in some way with the plot to murder Darnley, and each was terrified lest the whole iniquity should be disclosed if one of them were accused. Mary summoned Parliament to meet upon 17th April 1567,

and meanwhile held two Councils in March to consult as to what steps should be taken. Anticipating an accusation, Bothwell boldly rose at the first of the meetings, and "demanded to be put on his trial, offering to surrender himself in the meantime a prisoner, and to remain in ward till after his assize." This effrontery can only be explained upon the supposition that he had the bond that had been signed at Craigmillar, and could have proved the complicity of those leaders who were to be his judges. He agreed to appear at the Tolbooth of Edinburgh on 12th April to answer the charge of treasonable murder. Moray began to fear that his duplicity would be exposed, and he took his usual plan of disappearing. He announced his intention to Mary, saying that he meant to spend five years abroad to retrench. She besought him, with tears, to remain, but he was obdurate. Then she asked him specially not to go to England or France, but to Flanders. He may have promised, but he straightway went to Berwick, then to the English Court, and thence to France.

The task of prosecuting Bothwell fell upon Lennox, the father of the murdered man, but when the time of the trial came on he did not appear. In the absence of an accuser the assize became a farce, and Bothwell was acquitted. The worst feature in this affair, so far as Mary is concerned, is that during the time Bothwell was under

accusation she conferred numerous favours upon him, and he was regarded as the principal nobleman at Court in the absence of Moray. But to this it may be replied that Mary had no one beside her at this time in whom she could trust implicitly. While it is not likely that she knew the particulars of the plot by which Darnley was to be slain, it is certain that she was aware of a deep conspiracy against the King's life, and she may have suspected that Bothwell was the chief agent. But, on the other hand, she must have seen that she had herself narrowly escaped being involved in the disaster at Kirk o' Field, and she would naturally imagine that only half the felonious deed in contemplation had been accomplished. In all that band of traitors and murderers whom could she trust? Huntly, Argyll, and Morton were all deeply engaged in the plot, and she possibly thought that if Bothwell—the hardiest villain of them all—was on her side she might defy the others.

That astute nobleman made another bold move. On Saturday, 19th April 1567, he invited the principal lords who had been attending Parliament, to a banquet, held in Ainslie's Tavern, Edinburgh, and there a bond was signed declaring that Bothwell had been found innocent, and recommending that, in event of Mary deciding to marry again, Bothwell was the most fit person. They bound themselves not only to "sett forward" this

marriage, but to resist all who would impede it. The signers of this bond were the Earls of Huntly, Argyll, Errol, Crawford, Cassillis, Morton, Sutherland, and Caithness, and Lords Glamis, Boyd, and Ogilvy, besides the Archbishop of St Andrews (whose signature was counterfeited), and six of the bishops. This strange document recommended the murderer of Darnley, then a married man, as a proper match for the bereaved widow. Had Mary known of this bond the unanimity of her enemies in proposing the marriage would have put her on her guard against Bothwell.

After the Kirk o' Field incident Mary had sent the infant Prince to Stirling Castle for safety, and placed him under the charge of the Earl of Mar. The order for the safe-keeping of the Prince is still preserved among the Mar documents at Alloa House, and is dated 29th March 1566-7. When Parliament rose, Mary made a journey to Stirling on 21st April to visit her son, and on 23rd April she set out from Stirling for Edinburgh, but became sick on the way, not without suspicion of poison. At Linlithgow Palace she remained through the night, starting on Thursday, 24th April, for Holyrood.

It was the duty of Bothwell as Sheriff of Mid-Lothian to meet the Queen at the boundary that shire, and conduct her to the capital. She had only twelve persons with her. Bothwell met her with eight hundred men at the bridge over

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JAMES, EARL OF BOTHWELL

From the original painting

By permission of the Honble. Mrs Boyle

Gogar Burn. He seized the reins of the Queen's horse, and turned her violently aside from the path she was pursuing. He caused her to make a circuit around Edinburgh, and took the road to Dunbar Castle, which he had prepared for her reception as prisoner. Lethington and Huntly were both with the Queen, but, so far as known, they made no protest. And it is a very suggestive fact that, on the day before this Sabine Raid took place, Sir William Drury, the English Ambassador, then at Berwick, could write to Cecil telling him that Dunbar was provisioned, and that Bothwell had some dark purpose in view. How could he know? Moray was at Berwick in his company at that very time!

It is easy to understand how Bothwell, having the support of the lords, might venture upon this daring abduction. The difficulty is to know whether Mary was a willing captive. Her own protestations after the event show that she was not a consenting party to the abduction, though her situation then might have induced prevarication. In a letter written shortly afterwards she alludes to the Ainslie bond, and says of Bothwell: "The same being once obtained, he began afar off to discover his intention to us, and to essay if he might, by humble suit, purchase our good-will; but finding our answer nothing corresponding to his desire, he suffered not the matter to sleep." This is not the language she would

have used had her abduction been a preconcerted plan with her consent.

Nevertheless, there are several of Mary's defenders who entertain the idea that the "ravishing" of the Queen by Bothwell was only an apparent outrage. Andrew Lang writes thus: "The natural inference is that she, like many other women, was not proof against the charms of Bothwell, who, moreover, had practically saved her after Riccio's murder. No man can record this opinion without regret. Charm, courage, kindness, loyalty to friends and servants — all were Mary's. But she fell; and passion overcame her, who to other hostile influences presented a heart of diamond." Perhaps, after all, Spenser's line sums up the situation: "O, who does know the bent of woman's fantasy?" If Mary's love for Bothwell was so intense and shameless as her accusers suggest she certainly had the strangest methods of exhibiting the depth of her attachment, and she insanely brought about the overthrow of her lover in a manner needlessly diabolical.

Bothwell's first step was to procure a divorce from his wife. This he did by representing that, as they were within the forbidden degrees of kinship, his marriage had been illegal. He did not mention the fact that he had procured a Papal Dispensation permitting the marriage before it took place, and his wife was equally silent.

This document was discovered by the late Dr John Stuart, and published by him in 1874 in his book entitled "A Lost Chapter in the Life of Mary, Queen of Scots." On 6th May 1567 Bothwell brought the Queen to Edinburgh under an armed escort, and conducted her as a captive to the Castle. He then caused the banns of their marriage to be published at St Giles'; and while she was a prisoner several Scottish nobles met at Holyrood, and signed another bond declaring "that the marriage between the Queen and the Earl of Bothwell was very meet." Mary must then have seen that she was wholly in Bothwell's power. On 14th May she created him Duke of Orkney, and on Thursday, 15th May 1567, Mary and Bothwell were married in the Chapel of Holyrood by Protestant ceremonial, in the presence of a few of the nobles. The French Ambassador, Du Croc, declined to be present.

If Mary's marriage was prompted by love she soon had cause to regret it. Sir James Melville thus alludes to Bothwell's conduct at Holyrood: "He was so beastly and suspicious that he suffered her not to pass a day over without causing her to shed abundance of salt tears." This is not the aspect which might be expected from triumphant love; and the close guard of armed men which he maintained around her savoured little of the mutual faith that exists between erring mortals. The end of Bothwell's

power was near. The lords who had signed his two bonds gradually fell off from him, and became his enemies. They assembled their forces at Stirling, professing that their object was to release the Queen from Bothwell's thraldom. When they advanced in force towards Edinburgh he fled to Borthwick, and Mary speedily joined him. She was now convinced that her dethronement was contemplated.

The associate lords gained possession of Edinburgh, and with Morton at their head declared they were "minded with all their forces to deliver the Queen's most noble person forth of captivity and prison, and to punish Bothwell both for the cruel murder of the late King Henry and the ravishing and detention of the Queen." When the army approached Borthwick the courage of Bothwell failed, and he escaped to Dunbar, leaving the Queen behind. As the troops could make no impression on Borthwick they fell back towards Dalkeith, and Mary, disguised in male attire, took horse under cover of night. She had reached Black Castle, when she was suddenly confronted by Bothwell, who led her again captive to Dunbar.

Under his control a royal mandate was issued calling upon the country to rise in defence of the Queen, and Bothwell soon found himself marching upon Edinburgh at the head of two thousand men. The associate lords had mus-

tered about three thousand men, and the armies confronted each other at Carberry Hill. Vain attempts were made by Du Croc to bring about a reconciliation. Kirkcaldy of Grange was sent for by the Queen, and to him Bothwell, in the vein of Bobadil, proposed to offer single combat to any of the lords, so as to prove his innocence. Lindsay of the Byres was chosen by the Lords as their champion, and this comic duel was actually about to begin when Mary interposed. She declared to Kirkcaldy that she would surrender herself if Bothwell were not pursued.

The lords must have made a promise of some kind, for Bothwell was permitted to slip away to Dunbar, while Mary was brought to Edinburgh as the captive of Morton. With daring effrontery the murderers of Darnley had prepared a banner, which represented pictorially the dead body of the King stretched beneath a tree; while the infant Prince knelt beside him, with a label proceeding from his mouth, upon which was inscribed the legend: "Judge and avenge our cause, O Lord!" No more complete proof can be given of the utter atheism of these men than their appealing to the highest tribunal to avenge the deed of which they were themselves guilty. Beneath this ensign, which told of their own infamy, Mary was led through the streets of Edinburgh, and lodged in the Black Turnpike, near the Tron Church, a temporary city prison for reprobates.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon this most painful part of Mary's career. Suffice it to say that she was at first surrounded by the Edinburgh burgesses, who sought to protect and rescue her; but on the persuasion of Lethington and Morton she bade them disperse. Then the lower class of inhabitants clustered around her as she made her way to Holyrood, and insulted her by ribald jests and street mockery. "I am innocent!" she cried. "I have done nothing worthy of blame. Why am I thus handled, seeing I am a true Princess, and your native Sovereign? You are deceived by false traitors. Good Christian people, either take my life or free me from their cruelty!" But the rabble was impervious to her agonised appeals, and she passed on to Holyrood between her captors. She was lodged in the Palace for that night; but the lords were alarmed by the attitude of the burgesses, and were urgent to have her removed to a place of security. During the still watches of the night a warrant was drawn up for her committal to the Castle of Lochleven as a prisoner of State.

The choice of this prison at once shows the secret hand which was surreptitiously working her overthrow. No one but the Earl of Moray could have suggested the curious complication that now took place. The warrant was signed, among others, by Morton, Mar, Glencairn, Ruthven, Lindsay of the Byres, and Sir William Douglas

of Lochleven. Every one of them was related by blood or marriage to the absent Earl of Moray, and his after conduct proves that he was in active collusion with them. The Lady of Lochleven, to whose charge she was to be committed, was his mother—the unwedded wife of James V.—who saw Mary as the obstacle between her son and the throne. Mar was her brother, and Lindsay of the Byres was wedded to one of her daughters. She had married Sir Robert Douglas of Lochleven, full cousin of the Earl of Morton, Mary's inveterate enemy. To suppose that Moray was ignorant of a plot in which all his nearest relatives were actively engaged is to reject wilfully as complete a chain of circumstantial evidence as was ever laid before a court of justice. Lochleven, the very place chosen, links him inseparably with the scheme. But, as usual, he could prove an alibi.

Mary was aroused from her repose by Lindsay and Ruthven, compelled to assume the outer cloak and hood worn by the lower orders, and, thus disguised, was carried swiftly away on horseback, in the midst of an armed company, to the shores of the Forth. She was ferried across the river, and then the cavalcade, striking inland, soon reached Lochleven. Hitherto Mary did not know her destination, but whenever she saw the towers of Lochleven Castle — the place formerly designed by Moray for her incarceration—she

knew the fate in store for her. By the shore of the Loch she refused to enter the boat that was to carry her into captivity; but she was promptly coerced by her captors, and was received at the Castle by Lady Douglas of Lochleven, who reproached her in unmeasured terms. She was then committed to the charge of Sir William Douglas of Lochleven, half-brother of Moray, who had been one of the assassins of Riccio. The lords had risen in arms under the pretence of releasing her from the thraldom of Bothwell, but they were now placing her under a more irksome and illegal bondage.

After Bothwell escaped from Carberry Hill to Dunbar he summoned a Council there, which was numerously attended; but the supporters of the Queen would not have Bothwell as a leader. Many of them assembled afterwards at Hamilton, though they hesitated to take any action till they could communicate with the imprisoned Queen. The lords, on the other hand, were sending begging-letters to Elizabeth, beseeching her to send the money necessary to complete the dethronement of Mary. But Elizabeth had a double game to play. She sought to obtain possession of the Prince, who was heir-apparent of the throne of England, and she instructed Throckmorton to obtain Mary's consent to the removal of James. The lords, however, got word of this plan, and forbade Throckmorton to go near Lochleven.

They informed him that it was their purpose "to make a process to condemn her, to crown the Prince, and to keep her in prison all the days of her life."

From the time of her imprisonment Mary had been constantly guarded by Lindsay, the son-in-law of Lady Douglas, but on 23rd July, five weeks after her entrance to Lochleven, he was called to Edinburgh to meet Morton and his associates. Three deeds had been prepared for the Queen to sign, by which she would complete her abdication. Sir Robert Melville and Lord Lindsay brought these back on 24th July to Lochleven. Melville, upon whom she had showered many favours, had a private interview with Mary, during which he told her that certain deeds had been brought for her signature, and that she should not hesitate to sign them, as that was the only method to preserve her life. Mary would not listen to his charming. Then he mysteriously drew his sword from his scabbard, and unrolled a letter which he had placed there for secrecy. It was from Throckmorton, advising her to sign the deeds, as "nothing done under her present circumstances could be of any force when she regained her liberty." But Mary would have none of their deeds, and Melville spent his words in vain.

Then Lindsay burst into the apartment, and, seizing the deeds, cast them rudely on the table

before her, and ordered her to sign them at once, or dread the consequences. She took them up, and glanced over them. The first parchment made her declare that, "being in infirm health, and worn out with the cares of government, she had taken purpose voluntarily to resign her crown and office to her dearest son, James, Prince of Scotland"; the second deed appointed Moray as Regent during the Prince's minority; and the third directed Morton and his fellow-conspirators to carry on the government till Moray's return. Mary indignantly refused to sign. Lindsay sternly commanded her, with an oath, to affix her signature, or "he would do it with her heart's blood, and cast her into the Loch to feed the fishes." She could not doubt the brutality of one of Riccio's murderers, and she sank into her chair, overpowered with emotion. Then Melville whispered again to her that the deeds would not be binding upon her, since they had been extorted by force while she was in durance. Lindsay grew impatient, and placing the pen in Mary's hand he ordered her to sign, or he would have her thrown into the deepest dungeon in the Castle. Terrified by his threats she at length signed the fatal deeds. To give them validity they must have the Great Seal attached. Lindsay took them to the Privy Seal Office in Edinburgh, and there, at the dagger's point, he compelled Thomas Sinclair to seal the documents. In no

court in the civilised world would deeds thus extorted have been held as valid and binding.

The usurping lords next proceeded to crown the infant Prince. The ceremony took place in the East Church of Stirling on 29th July 1567, when "Mr Knox made an excellent sermon before the coronation." On 11th August Moray returned to Edinburgh, and prepared to assume office as Regent. He visited Mary at Lochleven on 15th and 16th August, and had long interviews with her. In the draft of a letter to Lord Herries (now at Donibristle) Moray declared that the Queen had insisted upon his accepting the Regency. Mary's own account is radically different. She wrote: "When he found the Queen dissuaded him from accepting the Regency, and that she confided in his assistance, he threw off the mask, and told her he could not be excused from it." These statements cannot both be true; let the reader judge whether he will believe the imprisoned Queen when she tells how she sought the aid of her brother in her dire distress, or "the Good Regent," who had reached the goal of his ambition by murder and treachery.

On 22nd August Moray was proclaimed Regent. This ceremony, following upon a fraudulent deed, was performed after obtaining consent of Parliament. Shortly afterwards the deeds of abdication were sent to Elizabeth, and were never allowed to pass out of her hands. Surely this is

proof that she had a share in the plot, and had made Moray her paid servitor. The later deeds of the Regent need not here be narrated, save in so far as they bear upon Queen Mary's life.

Mary was pining for several weeks upon a bed of sickness in Lochleven. Her misfortunes had touched the heart of George Douglas, the youngest brother of the Laird of Lochleven, and his devotion to her gave occasion for the invention of a scandal that "there was over-great familiarity" between them. Drury, one of the English tattlers, declared to Cecil that Mary had proposed to the Regent that she should marry George Douglas, but that the Regent disapproved. Several plans for the release of Mary were devised and attempted by George Douglas, but they all miscarried through the treachery of one of the Laird's dependents whom Douglas had trusted. One of these plans almost succeeded. It was customary for the soiled linen to be taken from the Castle to Kinross periodically to be cleaned, and George Douglas arranged that Mary should change garments with the laundress, and return to the shore in the boat. On 25th March this plot was attempted. Mary hastily changed robes with the woman, wrapped a muffler about her face, took up the bundle, and got safely on board the boat. When midway between the Castle and the shore one of the boatmen, astonished at the woman's silence,

advanced to remove the muffler. Instinctively Mary raised her bejewelled hand to prevent this, and thus revealed that she was no simple laundress. Finding that she had betrayed herself she assumed an attitude of command, and ordered the men to row to the shore; but they were fearful of the consequences, and carried her back an unwilling captive.

Her escape was ultimately effected by very simple means. In Lochleven Castle at this time there was a boy of sixteen years known as "little Willie Douglas," who had been left as a babe at the gateway, and was supposed to be a natural son of Sir William Douglas. He attended the Queen as page, and was quite unsuspected, but he was ambitious of serving his mistress in a special manner. He proposed that she should communicate with Lord Seton to bring a company of horsemen to the shore, and he would manage her escape by a postern gate leading to the loch-side. She had no writing material, but with a piece of carbon she wrote a message on her handkerchief, which George Douglas conveyed to Seton. That nobleman brought sixty horsemen to Lochleven, and posted them in a secluded glen at the base of the West Law in the Lomond range, near the village of Balgedie, where they were to await a signal.

On the evening of Sunday, 2nd May 1568, the signal to be in readiness was conveyed to Seton,

who now had a hundred men in hiding. It was usual for the family in the Castle to have supper at half-past seven, and at that hour the sentinels took their places at the table. The gates of the Castle were locked, and the keys laid on the table beside Sir William Douglas. On this evening Willie Douglas managed to abstract the keys unobserved, and, hastening to the Queen's apartment, he hurried her down the stair to the postern gate, where his boat was in waiting. As they retired Douglas locked all the doors behind him, so as to delay pursuit, and he had taken the precaution to injure all the boats on the island, thus gaining time should the fugitives be discovered.

Once out on the Loch, Mary's spirits rose, and she took an oar to help her young deliverer. When they had reached a safe distance from the Castle she stood erect in the boat, which was the preconcerted signal, and Seton's men were ready to meet her when she landed. The inmates of the Castle meanwhile had been alarmed, but it took some time to force the locked doors and to make the boats fit for the water. Two shots were fired from the Castle; but Mary's little craft was far beyond range, and the Queen soon found herself on shore, free, and surrounded once more by a band of faithful and enthusiastic warriors, devoted to her service, and ready to die in her defence. The romance of her life was not yet over.

Taking the road through Kinross by Gairney Bridge the party set out for North Queensferry, intending to cross the Forth some distance from Edinburgh, and to rouse the country before the capital was attacked. They embarked in a fishing-boat, and landed near South Queensferry, and Lord Seton led the fugitives to his Castle of West Niddry, near Winchburgh, which they reached in safety about midnight. Secure from pursuit Mary could now rest in the midst of her faithful nobles, confident that the news of her escape would rally many to her standard. She had entered Lochleven on 16th June 1567, and she escaped on 2nd May 1568. This was but a foretaste of many long and weary years of imprisonment which she was yet to endure.

CHAPTER XII

LANGSIDE, AND AFTER

I had great beauty; ask thou not my name;
No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came
I brought calamity.

TENNYSON.

INTELLIGENCE of the intended escape of the Queen had been sent to Hamilton, then the headquarters of her party, and Lord Claud Hamilton, son of the late Governor Arran, now Duke of Chatelherault, was ready to receive her, and augment her band by his own immediate followers. On the morning after her escape she was conducted by Seton and Lord Claud to the Palace of Hamilton, where her supporters had been congregated. Here she publicly declared that her signature to the three deeds of abdication had been obtained by force; that she had signed them under fear of personal violence; and that she utterly revoked the terms they contained. Her statement as to the treatment whereby she had been compelled to sign was corroborated by George Douglas and by Sir Robert Melville, the latter of whom had deserted the Regent, and joined the Queen's party. Many

of the nobles who had held back while Bothwell was associated with her now hastened to join their forces to hers. Amongst these were the Earls of Argyll, Cassillis, Rothes, and Eglinton, and Lords Herries, Somerville, Yester, Livingstone, Fleming, Ross, and Borthwick. In a brief period she found herself at the head of six thousand men.

The nobles who now surrounded her formed her Council, and proposed to carry out a warlike policy. They issued a decree stating "that her abdication, having been extorted from her by fear, was null and void; and all the Acts passed by the pretended Parliament, that had been convened without her authority, were invalid." With this document in her possession Mary thought it possible to achieve an amicable settlement of the dispute with Moray, and thus avoid bloodshed. But Moray was not to be dispossessed of power so easily. He knew that Elizabeth would blame him for allowing Mary to escape, and the desertion of his cause by so many of the nobles made him dubious of the result. Throckmorton, however, assured him of Elizabeth's support, and he decided to risk the fortune of war. Having seized upon the public treasury he found he was not in immediate lack of money; and the sale of those jewels belonging to Mary which the rapacity and vanity of his wife could spare to him enabled him to fight the Queen with the produce of her own property. Some of the most valuable jewels were

sold to Elizabeth, who was not above becoming a resetter of stolen goods when she could purchase them on her own terms.

Mary, on the other hand, was placed in a serious difficulty. She had no control over the exchequer, and she had been basely robbed of the jewels she had brought from France. She had thus to depend upon the charity of her friends for the support of the army that had mustered in her defence. Still anxious to prevent a contest she appealed again to Moray; but the pious Regent, in defiance of the custom of all save barbarous nations, seized upon her messenger, and imprisoned and manacled him as though he had been a dangerous malefactor. This deed roused Mary's warlike spirit, and she prepared to fight for her crown.

Moray was at Glasgow with his immediate following when he learned of the Queen's escape, and he at once issued orders that the troops should convene at Glasgow. He expected that Mary's first move from Hamilton would be towards Dunbarton Castle, and he intended to intercept her, and to gain that stronghold first. But the defection of so many of his former supporters seriously crippled him, and he could not command more than four thousand men; while Mary's army numbered about six thousand, within about seven miles of his encampment. Huntly, he knew, was raising the northern shires, and Moray would soon be placed between two hostile forces. To Stirling

he dared not retire, for the first sign of retreat would raise the whole country against him. The floods in the north, he learned, had delayed Huntly, and Moray found that he must precipitate a conflict or lose all. He decided to wait the attack of the Queen's army at Glasgow.

Though the royal army greatly outnumbered that of the Regent the supplies were defective, and caused murmuring among the soldiers. Argyll had determined that his return to allegiance should be rewarded by his having full command of the forces; but Lord Claud Hamilton, as the nearest blood-relation of the Queen, claimed that position. Neither was specially fitted to lead an army on the battlefield; but Mary, unfortunately, decided in favour of Argyll, and he was placed at the head of the troops. Argyll's plan was to attack the Regent's army, surround it, and cut off the Glasgow supplies; but he did not consider that Moray's position was so critical that he would fight with the courage of desperation. The accounts given by various historians of the movements of the troops are so contradictory that it is not easy to give a lucid description of the Battle of Langside; yet it must be recorded, as the last stand which Mary made for freedom.

The army of the Regent was encamped at Barrowfield, a village then about a mile and a half from Glasgow, but now included in the city. The situation permitted of a retreat to Stirling by the

Cumbernauld Road, while it prevented any westward movement of the royal army without Moray's cognisance. On the evening of 12th May 1568 Argyll marshalled his army, and, crossing the Clyde at Hamilton, took the south bank of the river, intending to recross it at Glasgow Bridge, and thus come between the rebels and the city. The manœuvre was a clumsy one, and it was rendered quite futile by Moray's boldness and dexterity. Moray was informed of this movement by his spies, and hastened to checkmate it. After nightfall, while the troops of Argyll were lingering near Castlemilk (whither Mary had come), Moray suddenly evacuated his camp, and effected a speedy march by causing each of his troopers to take up a foot-soldier on his horse behind him. Reaching the southern side of the river by the bridge at Glasgow he traversed the district of Gorbals, and took up his position upon an eminence near the little village of Langside, from which he could easily command the roads to Renfrew, to Paisley, and to the south of Scotland. His forced march had given him the choice of ground.

When Argyll and his laggard army awoke next morning (13th May) they beheld, to their astonishment, from their post on Cathkin Braes, that the opposing height was occupied by a hostile array, whose skilful disposition effectually blocked the way. Between them lay the spreading fields of

Langside, evidently to become the scene of a fierce contest. The plain between the two forces was intersected by a side path which ran from the Cathcart Road to the highway, and as it was bounded with hedgerows and dotted with trees, Kirkcaldy of Grange availed himself of their shelter, and placed the Regent's hagbutteers behind them. The main body of Moray's army kept its post on the hill, and awaited the advance of the royal cavalry; and as these horsemen dashed down the narrow pathway Kirkcaldy's men could safely pick them off and break up the column without exposing themselves. The confusion that ensued was direful to contemplate, though its cause has never been fully explained. It has been stated that in the early part of the day Argyll's nerves gave way, and he fell in an apoplectic fit, which incapacitated him for the command; and as no provision had been made for such a contingency, the Queen's troops were left without a leader.

The army of Mary was a motley assemblage of the tenants and clansmen of her adherents, having no common link to bind them save a lukewarm devotion to herself, which existed at the caprice of their chiefs, and each section was ready to abandon her cause to gratify private revenge or follow a family feud. Thus it happened that the unity which Moray had secured in his army by liberal bribes was wholly wanting in the royalist

army, where the leaders were quarrelling upon points of precedence.

Tradition asserts that the Earl of Mar, who had joined his nephew Moray at Glasgow, had brought with him his precious charge, the young King James VI., lest the Castle of Stirling might be assaulted in his absence; and various spots are shown in the neighbourhood of Langside as the reputed resting-place of the royal infant's cradle during the battle. The banner reared above him was that which bore the impious adjuration, "Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord!" which the murderers of Darnley unfalteringly advanced. It is doubtful whether Mar would have risked his royal ward in the midst of a conflict so doubtful, knowing that the royalist troops far exceeded those of the Regent. The height near Cathcart Castle from which Mary and her immediate attendants viewed the contest is within sight of Hagbush Hill, where the infant King was said to have been placed; and she would thus be able to see the place where her babe lay (if he, indeed, were there), from whom an iron fate had estranged her, and whom she was never to look upon more.

From her post of observation Mary soon saw that the reckless charge of the horsemen and the disorderly advance of the infantry were likely to result in ruin, and she determined to endeavour herself to lead them. Leaping upon her horse,

she galloped into the midst of the soldiery, and strove to direct their movements; but the task was vain, and she was forced to retire. "The Queen-Mother assured Brantôme that Mary mounted her good hackney, and rode into the battle like another Zenobia, to encourage her troops to advance, and would fain have led them to the charge in person; but she found them all quarrelling among themselves, insensible to her eloquence, and more inclined to exchange blows with each other than to attack the rebel host. Nor was this all, for she had reason to fear that some of them were in league with the conspirators, and were plotting to seize her person, and carry her off a prisoner to England."

Reduced to this condition of anarchy, and entirely without a competent leader, the superior numbers of the royalist army merely served to render the confusion greater. When the broken ranks of the cavalry, thrown into hopeless disorder by the deadly fire of the hagbutteers, had reached the centre of the plain between the forces, Moray let loose his pikemen upon them, and completed their discomfiture. Vain were the attempts of the royalist foot-soldiers to retrieve their reverses. So closely did they come to quarters with their opponents that both parties flung aside their pikes, and fiercely assailed each other with their daggers. Calderwood writes: "There was no yeelding on either side for the space of

halfe an houre, so that when speares were brokin, they cast whingers, brokin peeces of speeres, stones, or whatsoever came to their hand, at the faces of their enemeis."

Before midday the battle had been decided, and the insurgent army was victorious. Mary, whose arms had never before suffered reverse in battle, saw too plainly that her star was waning, and her tears fell afresh when she found herself once more compelled to become a fugitive in her own land. Mounting her steed, and accepting the guidance of Lord Herries, she proposed to attempt a circuit round the field of battle, and by crossing the Clyde at Erskine Ferry to reach Dunbarton Castle before the other combatants, but the little party had not gone far upon the Renfrew Road ere they met a few of the vassals of the Earl of Lennox, who advanced upon them with scythes, and opposed their passage. Mary and Herries thereupon turned southwards, hoping to reach a place of safety in Galloway, although, her flight having become known to Moray, parties of horsemen were scouring the country in search of the fugitive Queen.

After a day of unexampled trial, during which her fortitude and endurance had been put to the severest test, she at length reached Corrah Castle, the seat of Lord Herries, and there dismounted from her steed to rest, having ridden sixty miles from the field of Langside almost without

drawing rein. Thence she removed to Terreagles, near Dumfries, on 15th May; but having heard that Archbishop Hamilton and many of her friends had found refuge in the Abbey of Dundrennan she directed her course thither, and reached the place in safety. The accounts which she received from the Hamiltons of the carnage at Langside convinced her of the hopelessness of her cause. The arms of the son had vanquished those of the mother, and she now saw only one method of escape. She was about to take the most fatal step in all her career.

To Mary in her extremity it seemed that there was only one to whom she could look for aid—her kinswoman, Elizabeth. She knew that much of the disaffection among her own subjects had been caused by the secret plotting of that Queen and the subsidies which had been sent from England to the rebels; but, on the other hand, she judged that the idea of a rebellious army taking the field against the lawful Sovereign would terrify Elizabeth into an alliance with her, lest a similar incident should happen in England. Besides, there was a romantic bond of affection between them in the shape of a ring which the Queen of England had sent to her years before, with every profession of love and service, and this glittering bauble was now to lure Mary to destruction. Elizabeth's promise had been that "if she returned it to her in any season of

distress she would do her best to aid her." Mary did not look upon this as an empty phrase, as is proved by her own letters. On the day before her escape from Lochleven she wrote to Elizabeth reminding her of the ring, and telling her that she had often besought Sir Robert Melville to bring it to her, but he had refused, saying: "He dare not let me have it." The letter showed that, had she then possessed the ring, she would have sent it to Elizabeth as an appeal for help. Her escape from Lochleven prevented her from knowing that Elizabeth had treated her petition with contemptuous silence.

The fatal ring had been brought by Melville to her when he joined her at Hamilton, and now she bethought herself of it as affording a means of relief. She consulted Herries about it before she reached Dundrennan Abbey; but he discouraged her plan, earnestly imploring her not to place herself in the power of Elizabeth, who had betrayed her by encouraging the rebels. But his arguments were in vain. Mary's mind at this time was in a state which made her doubt her most faithful friends, and she had reached that stage of self-will and obstinacy which had already proved the ruin of several of her ancestors among the Stuart kings, and which was yet to bring one of her descendants to the block and three to perpetual exile. Mary asked no other advice, but sent a messenger from Dundrennan

with the ring and a message to Elizabeth. Her letter was in these terms:

"By unexpected means the Almighty Disposer of all things delivered me from the cruel imprisonment I underwent; but I have since lost a battle, in which most of those who preserved their loyal integrity fell before my eyes. I am now forced out of my kingdom, and driven to such straits that, next to God, I have no hope but in your goodness. I beseech you, therefore, my dearest sister, that I may be conducted to your presence, that I may acquaint you with all my affairs. In the meantime, I beseech God to grant you all heavenly benedictions, and to me patience and consolation, which last I hope and pray to obtain by your means.

"To remind you of the reasons I have to depend on England, I send back to its Queen this token of her promised friendship and assistance.

"Your affectionate sister,

"M. R.

"*From* DUNDRENNAN."

It was not until after she had taken the step of writing to Elizabeth that Mary consulted with her Councillors upon it, and the unanimity with which they condemned her action, instead of making her doubt its wisdom, only confirmed

her in the course she had adopted. The leaders of her Council, dreading what would happen if she carried out her resolution, obtained letters from her declaring that they had advised her not to enter England, and six months afterwards, in her letter to Beaton, she completely exonerated them. The supreme folly of trusting to Elizabeth was her own act. She dismissed her Council, and prepared to cross the Solway Firth, without even waiting for an answer to her appeal to Elizabeth. She would have had little satisfaction had she delayed, for Elizabeth quietly took the ring, and forgot to reply to the letter which accompanied it.

On Sunday, 16th May 1568, Mary set sail from Abbey-burn-foot for England in an open fishing-boat, accompanied by sixteen of her most trusty followers, among them being the Lords Herries, Livingstone, Boyd, and Fleming, and the two Douglases who had aided her escape from Lochleven. When in mid-channel she began to have misgivings about her enterprise, and proposed that the boatmen should steer for France; but the wind was adverse, and the boat unfitted for such a voyage, and within four hours the vessel was driven into the little harbour of Workington, in Cumberland. The Rubicon was passed—she would look on Scotland no more. On the following day the Earl of Northumberland sent a troop of his retainers, ostensibly to do her honour, but really to prevent her escape.

She was taken to Cockermouth Hall, and thence to Carlisle, where Sir Richard Lowther, the Deputy-Governor, took possession of her person, and lodged her securely in the Castle. Sir Richard intimated this capture to Elizabeth, and waited instructions. Lord Scroope and Sir Francis Knollys were sent from London to inform Mary that it was impossible for Elizabeth to meet her until she had cleared herself of the charge of murdering her husband.

Mary might have understood the meaning of this message, but she still clung to the hope that Elizabeth would prove friendly. She wrote again, reminding Elizabeth of the ring and of her promise. A verbal message was sent in reply, repeating the accusation of murder, and declining to hear Mary in her own defence. She was forbidden to hold communication with the subjects that were loyal to her, and was ordered to intimate to her friends in Dunbarton Castle that they were to accept no assistance from France. The victorious Regent Moray now intervened, and offered to submit the matter in dispute betwixt him and the Queen to Elizabeth's arbitration, having a fair idea as to what Elizabeth's award would be.

It was necessary, however, to remove Mary from the Borders, where a spirited attempt to escape might place her beyond the power of her enemies, and orders were given to prepare

Tutbury Castle, in Staffordshire—the very centre of England—for her reception. Elizabeth's hypocritical plea was that she desired to bring Mary nearer to herself, that she might confer more readily with her; and Mary, deceived by these false pretences, consented to leave Carlisle. Tutbury could not be made ready in time; but Moray was importunate to have her removed from the north, so she was forcibly carried by a troop of horse to Bolton Castle. The unhappy Queen now saw that she had made a false step, and wrote to Elizabeth asking leave to depart from England, but her note produced no reply. Elizabeth knew that so long as she detained Mary, and had the hirelings Moray and Morton ruling Scotland, that kingdom was virtually in her power. And no scruples of kinship or of international law were to be allowed to prevent her from keeping as a prisoner the Queen who had come as a visitor seeking help and protection.

CHAPTER XIII

TRIALS AND CAPTIVITY

O Fortune! how thy restlesse, wavering state
  Hath fraught with cares my troubled witt!
Witness this present prison, whither Fate
  Could beare me, and the joys I quitt.
Thou causedest the guiltie to be losed
From bandes, wherein are innocents inclosed,
  Causing the guiltless to be strait reserved,
  And freeing those that death hath well deserved.
But by her envie can be nothing wroughte,
So God send to my foes all they have thoughte!

A.D. MDLV. ELIZABETH, *prisonner.*

WHEN Queen Elizabeth wrote the lines at the head of this chapter she was in a similar condition to that in which Mary was now situated; but the sentiments which had found acceptance with her in 1555 were quite forgotten in 1568. Political success had so seriously altered her ideas of right and wrong that she could herself perform the wickedness which prompted her railing accusation against Fortune, by "causing the guiltless to be strait reserved." Mary could no longer deceive herself as to the fact that she was the prisoner of her enemy, and must only trust to receive clemency where justice was denied her.

Lord Herries had gone to London for Elizabeth's personal reply to Mary's repeated applications, and after long delay he returned with a verbal message that if Mary would commit her cause to Elizabeth she would soon be restored to her kingdom. Mary's trustfulness had now developed into folly. To show how eager she was to gain the good graces of Elizabeth, she sent orders to Huntly and Argyll, who had raised ten thousand men, and were advancing to meet the Regent, directing them to disband their followers, "as her good sister had guaranteed that Moray should not attempt anything of a hostile nature." George Douglas had gone to France, and had there assembled a thousand volunteers who were willing to aid their former Queen, but to him also she sent word to disperse this army. These foolish actions, it appears from Mary's own letters, were done at the verbal request of Elizabeth, sent by Lord Herries. Having thus got rid of Mary's warlike supporters, Elizabeth deemed that she might safely summon a Conference on Scottish affairs, to be held at York. Elizabeth's duplicity is shocking to every honourable mind. While she was verbally assuring Mary that she would replace the Scottish Queen upon the throne she did not scruple to write to Moray that he might be under no apprehension as to his tenure of office. Yet Mary so blindly trusted this deceiver that she wrote thus to her: "On your word there is

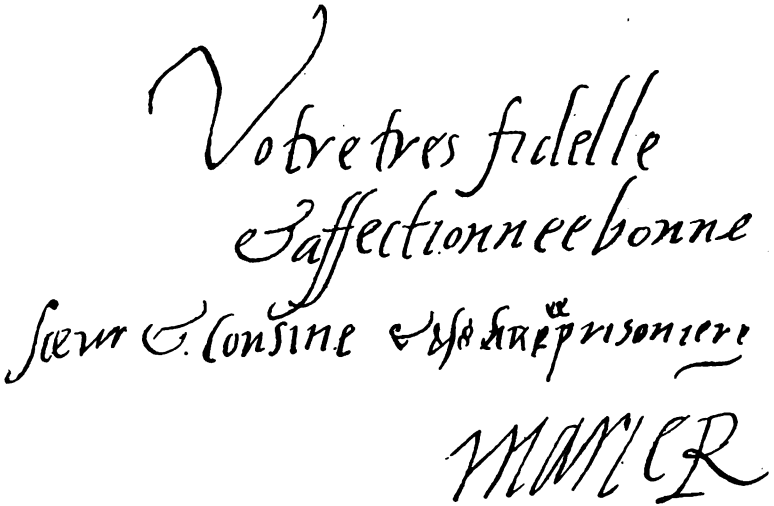
nothing I would not adventure, for I can never doubt your honour or your royal faith."

On 4th October 1568 the Conference was formally opened at York, with the Duke of Norfolk as President. At the very outset Norfolk demanded that as Moray had submitted his dispute to Elizabeth he should do homage to the English crown. Moray dared not do so, for Scotland would at once have cast him off. But Lethington came to his aid, and suggested that, until England had restored the lands formerly belonging to Scotland—Northumberland, Cumberland, etc.—no homage was due. Norfolk protested that the Conference must not prejudice England's claim to superiority, and then the parties representing the Scottish Queen and the Regent declared that they conserved their rights of independence. Thus the Scottish Commissioners denied the legality of the tribunal before which they appeared; while the English Commissioners, sitting as judges, refused to give the Scotsmen the right to appear at all unless they made admissions that would have nullified the whole proceedings.

It is not necessary here to detail the course of inquiry at York. Suffice it to say that Mary's representatives accused Moray of having made war upon the Queen, imprisoned her, and forced her to resign the crown. Moray replied that Mary had voluntarily abdicated, and appointed him Regent. Not a hint was given as to an accusa-

tion against Mary that she had murdered Darnley, because Moray had not yet received definite instructions from Elizabeth on this point. It had been settled that all communications between the parties and the English Commissioners should be in public, and by writing; but Moray broke through this condition, demanded and obtained a private interview, and sought to know whether Elizabeth would object to his accusing Mary of murder. He did not receive a satisfactory reply, and messengers were sent to Elizabeth to learn her intention on this point. Thus the alleged evidence against Mary was secretly submitted to her judges before she had any chance to reply or to expose the forged documents. Norfolk was too timid to act on his own initiative, and Elizabeth suddenly ordered that the Conference at York should be broken up, to meet again at Westminster.

The proofs which Moray showed privily to the Commissioners consisted of two contracts of marriage between Mary and Bothwell, and the contents of the famous Casket, being letters and sonnets, neither signed nor directed, but declared to have been written and sent to Bothwell while Mary was nursing Darnley at Glasgow. These Casket Letters have been the cause of much controversy, which cannot here be considered. The most elaborate examination of them is contained in Andrew Lang's "The Mystery of Mary Stuart." His conclusion is that, while some portions of the



AUTOGRAPH OF MARY STUART

most incriminating letters are genuine, these have been tampered with, though he thinks that the genuine portions are sufficient to tell against Mary's innocence. Without making a detailed analysis of the Casket Letters, two important and indisputable facts may be mentioned. The Duke of Norfolk presided at the York Conference, and not only saw all these documents, and encountered eye-witnesses of many of the deeds referred to, but he also knew the tainted source from which this evidence came. Now, the Duke had been a suitor for Mary's hand before she married Darnley, yet, with the supposed proofs that she had caused Darnley to be murdered, he actually renewed his suit, and was eager to join his fortunes with the widowed and oppressed Queen against whom these letters were produced. Again, Sir Francis Knollys, who had been in close attendance upon the Queen for five months, also saw these Casket Letters, but he laid so little stress upon them that he endeavoured to bring about a match between his nephew, George Carey, son of Lord Hunsdon —a near relative of Elizabeth—and the unfortunate captive. These facts are worth a volume of theorising founded upon minute criticism of the Casket Letters.

The Westminster Conference began on 26th November 1568. Elizabeth had ordered Moray to produce his charge of murder against the Queen, declaring that if he did not do so she

would depose him, and make Arran the Regent in his stead. Consequently Moray was forced to make his accusation that Bothwell had committed the murder, and that Mary had incited him to do the deed. The Earl of Lennox came forward to demand vengeance for the death of his son, though the Commissioners paid little heed to him. Lord Herries replied for the Queen, and accused the accusers of being themselves the murderers, as was proved by the bond which they had signed. Bishop Lesley, in the name of the Queen, demanded that she should be confronted with her accusers; but Elizabeth would not suffer this act of simple justice, whereupon Mary's representatives withdrew from the Conference. The Commissioners continued to sit, however, and examined the Casket Letters. These they compared in a perfunctory way with genuine letters of Queen Mary, and declared that "no difference was found." The Commissioners, however, did not undertake her condemnation. That they were not unanimous is proved by the fact that the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland shortly after took up arms in her defence, and sought to place her on the throne of England. On Monday, 10th January, by Elizabeth's orders, Cecil dismissed the Conference. The conclusion of their deliberations was thus formulated:

"Forasmuch as there had been nothing deduced against them [Moray and his friends] as

yet that might impair their honour and allegiance, so, on the other part, there had been nothing sufficient produced nor shown by them against their Sovereign, whereby the Queen of England should conceive or take any evil opinion of the Queen, her good sister, for anything she had seen."

Thus these potent Casket Letters, over which historians still wrangle, were deemed so unworthy of credence when they were produced that neither Elizabeth nor the Commissioners she had appointed would found any action upon them. The treason of Moray could be proved without the use of falsified documents, prepared at a time when forgery was common; but Elizabeth could not have convicted him without restoring Mary to her throne, and that was not the Queen of England's intention. Commenting upon this Conference Mr Lang remarks: "An inquiry more disgraceful was never conducted on an absent prisoner. Guilty or not guilty, Mary was foully wronged."

After the decision of the Conference, by which Mary was cleared of the accusation of murder, it might have been thought that she would have been at once released; but it was not so. Moray, who had been practically convicted of treason, was suffered to return to Scotland, but Mary was detained in strict confinement. The leading English noblemen of both forms of religion took

up her cause. Norfolk, Arundel, Northumberland, Westmoreland, Pembroke, Sussex, and Lord Clinton stood manfully in her defence, and declared that, "as a matter of justice, and for the honour of England, the Queen of Scots, having frankly and fearlessly confided her cause to the arbitration of their Sovereign, ought to be replaced in her royal estate by her appointment." Five of these nobles had seen all the evidence brought by Moray against Mary, four of them rose in revolt in her favour, and two were beheaded for her sake. This forms a grim comment on the Casket Letters!

The plea which Cecil advanced for detaining Mary as a prisoner went back to the time when she was married to Francis II. in 1558—more than ten years before. It urged that she could not be allowed to depart "until she have satisfied the wrong that she hath done to the Queen's Majesty in open claiming of the crown, and not making just recompense." Upon this trumpery plea the Queen of Scots was confined in prison by the Sovereign of another kingdom for nearly nineteen years—to be precise, for 18 years, 8 months, and 19 days—and then was "crewalie murderit" at Fotheringhay Castle. The record of that long imprisonment need only be briefly indicated.

While the Conference was sitting at Westminster Mary was immured at Bolton Castle; but she was

thereafter removed to Tutbury Castle, which she reached on 3rd February 1569, being received by the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury. This nobleman was her jailor in all for fifteen years. From Tutbury in the course of this year she was taken in succession to Wingfield, back to Tutbury, to Ashby-de-la-Zouche, and Coventry. In 1570 she was at Tutbury, Chatsworth, and Sheffield, remaining in the last-named place till 1577, when she was taken back to Chatsworth. She returned to Sheffield in 1578; was conveyed to Wingfield in 1584; to Tutbury, Chartley, Tixhall, and Chartley in 1585; and finally, on 25th September 1586, to Fotheringhay, where her melancholy career terminated.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EXECUTION

Alas! what am I? What's my life become?
A corse existing when the pulse hath fled;
An empty shadow, mark for conflicts dread,
Whose only hope of refuge is the tomb.
Cease to pursue, O foes, with envious hate,
My share of this world's glories hath been brief;
Soon will your ire on me be satiate,
For I consume and die of mortal grief.
And ye, my faithful friends who hold me dear,
In dire adversity, and bonds, and woe,
I lack the power to guerdon love sincere;
Wish, then, the close of all my ills below,
That, purified on earth, with sins forgiven,
My ransomed soul may share the joys of heaven.

Sonnet by MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS
(*Translated from the French by Miss Strickland*).

To suppose that Mary would supinely submit to the injustice dealt to her, and make no struggle for her liberty, is totally to misread her character. She devoted herself unremittingly to plots and intrigues for her own liberation, and though the strict watch kept upon her enabled her jailors to frustrate all her intentions, she produced new schemes and devices with amazing fertility, yet without success. All her fluttering was in vain. The foolish bird which had flown so innocently

and eagerly into the snare set for her, was destined to become the prey of the ruthless fowler. And when the circumstances are considered, Mary cannot be blamed for her strenuous efforts to regain her liberty. She was not a subject of Elizabeth, but a Queen of equal status—nay, of superior position, for her legitimacy had not been called in question. Even if it were true that she had consented to the murder of Darnley, that was a deed committed by Scotsmen upon Scottish ground, and Elizabeth had no more right to bring Mary to judgment upon this accusation than George III. would have had if he had sought to capture Bonaparte, and bring him to trial in an English court of law for the assassination of the Duc d'Enghien. The plea that Mary, when a girl of eighteen, had been induced to claim the English throne, and therefore, nine years after, should be kept for nineteen years in captivity, was a hollow pretence. Elizabeth kept Mary in prison in the hope that she would commit some error of judgment which would enable the English Queen to sacrifice the Scottish Sovereign.

It is most true that Mary, when in prison, directed her plots against the life and crown of Elizabeth; that she strove to animate the timid spirit of her son with some spark of ancestral fire, so that he might strive to liberate her; and that she entered into treaties with foreign Powers that she might be reinstated on her throne.

But what sovereign held in unjust bondage would have done less? Goaded by the unremitting severity of her to whom she had voluntarily committed her life, she even went the length of bequeathing the crown she had inherited to an alien power. Her son almost dreaded her return to Scotland, as certain to abridge his power. Philip II. of Spain, her brother-in-law, was difficult to move. Henri III. of France, also her brother-in-law, vapoured and blustered a little in her favour, as his elder brother, Charles IX., had done, but went no further. And though the Pope looked with compassion upon her suffering, his interference would have hindered rather than assisted her.

The removal of Mary by some other means than Elizabeth's own hand was the constant thought of the Queen of England. In the voluminous correspondence of Cecil, now at Hatfield House, there are many letters that show how active Elizabeth and her minister were in attempts to have Mary secretly murdered. Elizabeth's first proposals in this direction were made to the Regent Moray, but the bullet of an assassin had removed him ere the deed could be done. His successor, the Earl of Lennox, might have carried out Elizabeth's plans, but he too was assassinated a few months after he came into power. The next Regent, the Earl of Mar, was specially tempted in this direction.

In a document in Cecil's handwriting, dated 10th September 1572, there are recorded the instructions given to Sir Henry Killegrew, Cecil's nephew, when he was sent to Scotland, and it is plainly stated that, though Queen Mary might justly be executed in England, it would be more expedient that the prisoner should be handed over to the Regent Mar and to Morton, "that she should receive that she hath deserved." Mar would not listen to this proposal; and he died a few days after, from poison, presumably administered by his successor, Morton. When Morton came into power he was surrounded by so many enemies that he dared not move, and he was ultimately brought to the scaffold to expiate his many crimes.

In 1586, while Mary was confined at Wingfield Manor, the event known as the Babington Conspiracy occurred. Her hapless fate had excited the compassion of Anthony Babington, a young gentleman of fortune in the locality. A league for the assassination of Elizabeth had been formed among the Roman Catholics, and Babington was induced to join. Pooley, a spy sent by Walsingham, had joined this league, and he persuaded Babington to write to Mary, informing her of the proposed murder of Elizabeth, and asking for authority to act in Mary's name. This letter was carried first to Walsingham, who made some forged additions before it reached Mary. Her

reply was also taken to Walsingham, who kept it for ten days, and then delivered it—presumably with incriminating additions. The original letters, like the Casket Letters, must have been destroyed. Before Mary was accused, Babington and his accomplices were seized, and promptly executed, just as Nicholas Hubert was hanged by Moray and George Dalgleish disposed of by Morton, when these men might have been inconvenient witnesses.

On 11th October 1586 a Commission opened proceedings at Fotheringhay Castle, where Mary was imprisoned, to inquire as to her complicity with Babington. The Commissioners were thirty-four in number, including the Lord Chancellor and many peers, but, of course, no one of rank equal to that of Mary. As an independent sovereign she claimed the right to trial by her peers, but her protest was unheeded. She asked to have counsel to defend her cause, but by Elizabeth's command this was refused. Mary had, therefore, to appear in person before the Commissioners, and she made a spirited defence, though she could not overturn the foregone conclusion that she must die. For two days the Commission sat, and then the Queen abruptly brought it to a close by appealing for a trial before Parliament. That plan did not suit Elizabeth, so the further proceedings were conducted privately in the Star Chamber, and in the absence of Queen Mary. Years afterwards

her grandson, Charles I., when placed in a similar situation, thus described his condition:

> Felons obtain more privilege than I.
> They are allowed to answer ere they die;
> 'Tis death for me to ask the reason why.

Despite the fact that Mary's two Secretaries, who had been apprehended and forced to emit declarations incriminating her, now asserted that "the principal heads of accusation against the Queen were false," she was pronounced guilty. The Parliament, in defiance of all precedent, approved of the proceedings, and confirmed the sentence of death, joining in a petition to the Queen of England to expedite its execution.

Elizabeth, even after Mary's conviction, was unwilling to take the odium of the execution upon herself. Immediately after the Commissioners had left Fotheringhay she wrote to Sir Amyas Paulet, who then was custodian of Mary, a fulsome letter, to "my Amyas," praying that "God reward thee trebblefold in the double for the most troublesome charge so well discharged," and suggesting some other service which she did not describe. What was that service? The Earl of Leicester (once a suitor for Mary's hand) had written to Cecil and Walsingham before the Commission sat, bluntly declaring that "it would be better to remove the Queen of Scots by poison than to suffer her case to come before the Houses

of Parliament," as he doubted if they would decide against her. Just after Elizabeth had sent her grateful letter to Paulet, Walsingham wrote, on 1st February 1587, a missive to that esteemed servant and his assistant, Sir Drue Drury, which showed the further service required of them:

"We find by a speech lately made by her Majesty, that she doth note in you both a lack of that care and zeal for her service she looketh for at your hands, in that you have not in all this time (of yourselves, without other provocation) found out some way to shorten the life of the Scots Queen, considering the great peril she is hourly subject to, so long as the said Queen shall live."

Sir Amyas Paulet (the friend of Francis Bacon) had been a harsh and unsympathetic jailor to Queen Mary, but he would not imbrue his hands in the blood of his helpless prisoner. His reply to Walsingham was in these terms:

"Your letter of yesterday, coming to my hand this day, I would not fail, according to your direction, to return my answer with all possible speed, which I shall deliver unto you with great grief and bitterness of mind, in that I am so unhappy as living to see this unhappy day, in which I am required by direction of my most gracious Sovereign, to do an act which God and the law forbiddeth. My goods and life are

at her Majesty's disposition, and I am ready to lose them the next morrow, if it shall please her. But God forbid I should make so foul a shipwreck of my conscience, or leave so great a blot to my poor posterity, and shed blood without law or warrant."

It is important to notice the dates of these letters. Parliament adjourned on 2nd December, and during the last week of that month William Davison, Elizabeth's Secretary, wrote the warrant for Mary's execution. It was signed about the middle of January, but he was ordered to keep it secret, save from Cecil and Walsingham. Davison passed it under the Great Seal, but kept the dangerous document beside him. On 1st February, about a fortnight after the warrant was signed, Walsingham wrote the letter to Paulet already quoted, and Paulet's reply would be received on 3rd February. As he distinctly refused to murder the Queen of Scots, there was no need for further delay, and on 3rd February Elizabeth asked what Davison had done with the warrant. She did not ask it back, nor did she give him special orders about it, but Davison inferred that she meant him to give it to Cecil and Walsingham, and he did so. That very evening these noblemen took steps to put the warrant into execution. Elizabeth sought to blame Davison for precipitate action in this matter, and had him tried, condemned, fined in

ten thousand marks, and imprisoned for two years, though he declared that he had done all to please the Queen.

The warrant was addressed to the Earls of Shrewsbury, Kent, Cumberland, Derby, and Pembroke. Robert Beale, one of the Clerks of Council, was directed to go to Fotheringhay with the fatal document, and instruct Shrewsbury, the Earl-Marshal, and Kent, a fanatical Protestant, to act with him. Beale travelled with the executioner, and arrived at Fotheringhay on Sunday evening, 5th February 1587. The two Earls did not reach there till the following Tuesday. On the afternoon of that day they announced to Mary that her execution was to take place on the following morning at eight o'clock. She protested that this was too sudden to allow her time to make her will and provide for her servants; but the orders of Shrewsbury and Kent were peremptory: there could be no delay. Kent rudely taunted her with her fidelity to the Romish faith. "Madam," said he, "your life would be the death of our religion, and your death will be its preservation."

The writing of her will, and the giving away of her scanty wardrobe to her attendants, occupied Mary till two o'clock in the morning of 8th February 1587. She retired to rest, but rose at six, and bade her women "dress her as for a festival." Then she went to her oratory, and

spent a considerable time in prayer. Returning to her bed-chamber she assumed an air of cheerfulness, and strove to comfort those around by her placid resignation. Her will was read by Bourgoigne, the physician, in the hearing of her attendants. Finding that she had overlooked some of them, she repaired the omission. Then she knelt with the company, to pray together for the last time. Their devotions were rudely interrupted by the summons of the Sheriff, who had been sent to bring her to the hall, and they rose from their knees, and prepared to follow him. Disease had told so sadly upon her that she had little power of her lower limbs, and had to be assisted down the stair and along the corridor. Then her domestics were ordered back by the soldiers, and, only as a special favour, two of the women and four of the men were suffered to approach the place of the final scene.

The scaffold had been erected in the great banqueting hall of Fotheringhay Castle, and was closely guarded by the retainers of Shrewsbury, lest a rescue should be attempted. The platform upon which the block stood was raised about two and a half feet above the level of the floor, and a few steps had been provided as the means of ascent. Towards this spot she advanced as firmly as her lameness would permit; but she could not ascend to the platform without

assistance, and she stood for a moment, and looked round for the required aid. Not one of her own servants would help her to the scaffold, and Sir Amyas Paulet accepted the ill-omened task. "I thank you, sir," she said, as she leant on his arm and mounted the platform; "this is the last trouble I shall ever give you."

A chair had been considerately provided for her, and she sat composedly in it while the death-warrant was read to her. After this ceremony was completed, she asked that her almoner should be permitted to attend that he might pray with her; but this request was peremptorily refused. The Earl of Kent had brought "a good theologian," the Dean of Peterborough, to the execution, and that worthy prelate sought to engage the Queen in an ill-timed theological discussion. But she quietly yet firmly rebuked him, and engaged in silent prayer; while he delivered a violent oration, charging her to "repent of her former wickedness." When she had concluded her devotions, she arose and began to prepare for execution. The headsman and his assistant knelt, as was the custom, and besought her forgiveness. "I forgive you and all the world with all mine heart," she said, "for I hope this death will give an end to all my troubles." Jane Kennedy and Elizabeth Curle, her two attendants, assisted her to disrobe from her upper garments, and bared her

neck for the fatal stroke. Her eyes were bound with a white handkerchief fringed with gold, this task being performed by Jane Kennedy, who had aided the Queen to escape from Lochleven, and had served her faithfully through her long imprisonment.

With this service Mary's concern with earthly things was finished. Kneeling upon the cushion which had been laid beside the block, she said in an audible voice: "*In te, Domine, speravi.*"—"In Thee, Lord, have I hoped; let me never be put to confusion." As the executioner laid her hands upon the block that she might know her position blindfold, she repeated: "*In manus tuas.*—" "Into Thy hand, O Lord, I commend my spirit." Forgetful of everything, Mary had suffered her hands to rest on the block when she laid her head upon it. The executioner saw that the descending stroke would mutilate them, and his assistant sprang forward, seized her hands, and held them down firmly. The Earl of Shrewsbury raised his baton of office, and gave the fatal signal. Unnerved by the scene, the headsman took false aim, and his ineffectual blow only made a severe wound on the head. With invincible courage she remained firmly in her position. Thrice the blow descended ere her sufferings were terminated.

"God save Queen Elizabeth!" cried the executioner as he seized the head by the coiffure and held it up before the spectators.

"So let all her enemies perish!" was the pious prayer of the Dean of Peterborough.

"Amen!" responded the Earl of Kent—the only one in the company who testified approval.

The coiffure which the unhappy Queen had worn gave way in the headsman's hands, and the flowing locks, which had once been her pride, were shown to be prematurely grey and shorn close to the scalp. The two tirewomen now approached to perform the last office that decency required, but they were rudely repulsed. The executioners claimed the clothes of the Queen as their perquisite, and Shrewsbury and Kent stood by while Jane Kennedy and the headsman wrangled over the headless corpse of the Queen of Scotland and the alleged rightful heir of the crown of England.

Thus fell Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, in the forty-fifth year of her age, after a life of unexampled vicissitude and misfortune. The errors she committed were more of the heart than the head; and the lamentable catastrophe which terminated her career, unmerited, and inexcusable on the part of her captors, throws a halo over all her chequered reign. Her mutilated body was temporarily buried at Fotheringhay, and lay there for six months, until Elizabeth had succeeded in blaming everyone but herself for the "untoward accident" of Mary's execution. Then Elizabeth sought to pacify James VI. by having a State funeral, so the body was

brought to Peterborough, and interred with pomp in the Cathedral on 1st August 1587. After the crowns had been united for nine years, James VI. bethought him that his pusillanimous conduct towards his mother might be condoned by another State funeral, and Mary's remains were exhumed on 7th October 1612, and finally buried in Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster, beneath a splendid monument.

In the last year of Queen Mary's imprisonment a young English priest, Robert Southwell, came from Rome to England as a missionary, and was well acquainted with this last stage in Mary's career. It was his own lot to be arrested as a Roman Catholic, and tortured and executed in 1595 as a martyr for his religious faith. He left behind him these two verses, probably written in that exciting time when the judicial murder of the Scottish Queen made Europe tremble with indignation:

A Queen by birth, a prisoner by mishap,
From Crown to Cross, from throne to thrall I fell;
My right, my ruth; my title wrought my trap;
My weal, my woe; my worldly heaven, my hell.

By death from prisoner to a Prince enhanc'd,
From Cross to Crown, from thrall to throne again;
My ruth, my right; my trap my state advanc'd,
From woe to weal; from hell to heavenly reign.

THE END

INDEX

A

Abbeville, 76
"Ainslie Bond," 163, 165
Alva, Duke of, 70
Angers, Castle of, 26
Angus, Earl of, 13
Anjou, Duke of, 106
Argyll, Earl of, 95, 123, 150, 160, 163, 164, 183, 184, 196
Arran, Earl of, the Governor, 5, 9, 12, 17, 33, 63, 115, 180
— Earl of, son of Governor Arran, 104
Ashby-de-la-Zouche, 203
Athol, Earl of 119, 120, 160

B

Babington Conspiracy, 207
Balfour, Sir James, 150, 154
— Robert, Provost of Kirk o' Field, 154
Beaton, Cardinal, 10, 11
— James, Archbishop of Glasgow, 37, 147, 192
Bedford, Earl of, 124
Bell, Henry Glassford, 84
Boleyn, Anne, 52
Bolton Castle, 194, 202
Borthwick Castle, 168
Bothwell, James Hepburn, Earl of, 32, 125; banished and recalled, 126; appointed Lieutenant of the Marches, 127; joins Mary at Dunbar, 141; visited by Mary at Hermitage Castle, 146; Bothwell at Kirk o' Field, 155; brings gunpowder thither, 156; announces death of Darnley, 157; Elizabeth his enemy, 160; accused by Lennox of Darnley's murder, 162; acquitted, 163; carries off the Queen, 164; divorces his wife, 166; created Duke of Orkney, 167; married to Mary, 167; Bothwell leads army to Carberry Hill, 169; retires to Dunbar, 169, 172; the Casket Letters, 198
Bourgoigne, Mary's physician, 213
Boyd, Lord, 164, 192
Brantôme, Sieur de, 81, 82, 88, 187
Brown, Dr P. Hume, 22
Buchanan, George, 56, 146, 153

C

Caithness, Earl of, 164
Calais, 81, 85
Calderwood, the historian, 148, 187
Carberry Hill, Battle of, 169
Carlisle, 193, 194
Carlos, Don, son of Philip II., 104
Cassillis, Earl of, 37, 164, 181
Casket Letters, 152, 198, 199, 200, 201, 208
Catherine de Medicis, 23, 24, 31, 35, 43, 59, 60, 61, 67, 68, 71, 75, 76, 114
Cawood, Margaret, 156
Cecil, William, Lord Burghley, 78, 142, 165, 202, 206, 209, 211
Charles I., 2, 209
Charles II., 2
Charles V. of Spain, 59
Charles IX. of France, 68, 71, 75, 206
Charles Edward, Prince, 2
Chartley, 203
Chastelard the poet, 81
Chatsworth, 203
Cockermouth Hall, 193
Conæus, George, the historian, 27
Corrichie, Battle of, 110
Coventry, 203
"Craigmillar Bond" 150, 162
Craigmillar Castle, 147, 148 150, 152, 154
Crawford, Earl of, 164
Crawford of Jordanhill, Captain Thomas, 153
Cumberland, Earl of, 212
Cust, Lionel, 30

D

Dalgleish, George, 208
Darnley, Henry Stuart, Lord, 32; first meeting with Mary, 105; secret betrothal to Mary, 108; meets Mary at Wemyss, 111; urges marriage, 112; at Stirling, 113; secret marriage to Mary, 114, 116, 118; created Earl of Ross and Duke of Albany, 119; public marriage, 119; proclaimed King, 123; expedition against rebel lords, 123; matrimonial squabbles, 127; murder of Riccio, 133-138; escape from Holyrood, 140; flees to Dunbar, 141; birth of James VI., 144; retires to Glasgow, 145; matrimonial disputes, 147; at Craigmillar, 148; proposal to divorce him, 149; baptism of James VI., 151; at Glasgow, 151; sick there, 151; tended by Mary, 153; to be removed to Craigmillar, 153; taken to Kirk o' Field, 154; his death, 157, 158; reward for discovery of his murderers, 159; his burial, 159
D'Aumale, Duc, uncle of Queen Mary, 81
Davison, William, 211
D'Elbœuf, Marquis, uncle of Queen Mary, 81-99
De Foix, Comte, French Ambassador, 128

Derby, Earl of, 212
Dieppe, Scottish Commissioners at, 50
Douglas, Archibald, Provost of Edinburgh, 96
— George, 132, 137, 138, 142
— George, younger brother of Sir W. Douglas of Lochleven, 176, 177, 180, 196
— Sir Robert, of Lochleven, 78, 171
— Margaret, wife of Sir William, of Lochleven, 171, 173
— Sir William, of Lochleven, 170, 177, 178
— Willie, 177, 178
D'Oysel, Sieur, 73
Drury, Sir William, English Ambassador, 165
Du Croc, Sieur, the French Ambassador, 147, 169
Dudley, Robert, Earl of Leicester, 107, 108, 109, 111, 209
Dunbar Castle, 141, 143, 156, 165, 168
Dunbarton Castle, 17, 193
Dundrennan Abbey, 189, 191

E

Edinburgh Castle, 93
Edinburgh Magazine, 83
Edward VI., 8, 52, 73
Eglinton, Earl of, 181
Elizabeth, Queen of England, 3, 53, 57, 63, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 86, 87, 90, 105, 106, 109, 111, 114, 118, 123, 124, 128, 129, 131, 142, 160, 161, 172, 175, 181, 189, 191, 193, 194, 195, 196, 198, 205, 208, 209
Elizabeth of Valois, wife of Philip II., 53, 55
Eric, King of Sweden, 104
Errol, Earl of, 164
Erskine, Arthur, 76, 141
— John, of Dun, 37
— Lord, 14, 18
— Margaret, Lady of Lochleven, 77
— Margaret, wife of Sir William Douglas of Lochleven, 171

F

Falkland Palace, 4, 95
Fleming, Dr D. Hay, 18, 28, 41, 70
Fleming, Lady, 15
Fleming, Lord, 18, 37, 50, 192
Fotheringhay Castle, 202, 203, 208, 213, 216
Francis I. of France, 3, 16
Francis II. of France. Betrothal to Mary, 16; meets Mary, 22; proposed marriage to Mary, 35; marriage settlements, 38, 40; betrothal to Mary, 42, 43; the bridal, 44; honeymoon, 49; King of France, 59; his ill health, 60; begins to rule, 61; coronation, 62; promises to aid the Regent Moray in Scot-

land, 64; illness, 65, 66; death of, 67, 68, 69, 185
Froude, J. A., the historian, 73

G

Glamis, Lord, 164
Glasgow, 151, 152, 154, 182, 184, 198
Glencairn, Earl of, 124, 170
Gordon, Sir John, son of Earl of Huntly, 109, 110
Guise, Charles, Cardinal of Lorraine, 27
— Duchess of, Mary's grandmother, 24, 32
— Francis, Duke of, 27, 32, 47, 48, 61, 80

H

Hamilton, Lord Claud, 180, 183
Hatfield House, 206
Henri II. of France, 16, 25, 31, 35, 36, 38, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 53, 54, 57; death of, 58
Henri III. of France, 206
Henry VII., 8, 52, 53
Henry VIII., 7, 8, 13, 14, 46, 53, 73, 90
Hepburn of Bowton, 156
Hermitage Castle, 146
Herries, Lord, 181, 188, 190, 192, 196, 200
Hertford's (Protector Somerset) expedition, 13, 14
Holyrood, Chapel and Palace of, 72, 87, 88, 93, 94, 99, 122, 132, 141, 143, 154, 159, 164, 167, 170
Hubert, Nicholas ("French Paris"), 156, 208
Huntly, Earl of, 103, 109, 110, 145, 148, 150, 160, 163, 164, 182, 196

I

Inchmahome, Priory of, 15

J

James I. of Scotland, 1
James II. of Scotland, 1, 7, 10
James III. of Scotland, 1, 11
James IV., 2, 46, 105
James V., 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 13, 16, 44, 77, 78, 97, 105, 159
James VI., 2, 11; birth, 144; baptism, 151; at Stirling, 164; deed to make him King, 174; his cradle brought to Langside, 186; erects tomb for Mary, 217
James VII., 2
James VIII., 2
Jebb, Dr Samuel, 28
Jedburgh, 146, 147
Joinville, Castle of, 71

K

Katherine of Arragon, 52
Keith, Agnes, wife of Regent Moray, 105
Kelso, 147, 148
Kennedy, Jane, 178, 215

Kent, Earl of, 212, 213, 216
Ker of Faudonside, 137, 142
Kilwinning, Abbot of, 128
Kinross, 176, 179
Kirkcaldy of Grange, 185
Kirk o' Field, 153, 156, 157, 163, 164
Knox, John, 18, 68, 80, 82, 86, 88, 90, 91, 92, 93, 97, 119, 121, 135, 142, 175

L

Lambie, Captain Andrew, of Leith, 87
Lang, Andrew, 41, 82, 131, 198, 201
Langside, Battle of, 184
Leicester, Robert Dudley, Earl of, 107, 108, 109, 111, 209
Lennox, Matthew, Earl of, 11, 105, 118, 119, 120, 123, 127, 153, 154, 160, 162, 200, 206
— Lady Margaret Douglas, Countess of, 105, 108, 144
Lesley, Bishop John, 16, 26, 81, 85, 86, 200
Lethington, Maitland of, 79, 80, 97, 111, 142, 145, 148, 149, 150, 154, 160, 165, 197
Lindsay of the Byres, Lord, 131, 132, 142, 169, 170, 171, 173, 174
Linlithgow Palace, 4, 5, 95, 164
Lochleven Castle, 95, 170, 171, 172, 173, 175, 176, 177, 178, 190

M

M'Gill, James, Clerk of Register, 97
Magdalene de Valois, 3, 44
Maitland, William, of Lethington, 79, 80, 97, 111, 142, 145, 148, 149, 150, 154, 160, 165, 197
Mar, Earl of, 164, 170, 186, 206, 207
Marguerite of Valois, 44, 54
"Maries, The Four"—Mary Beaton, Mary Seaton, Mary Livingstone, and Mary Fleming, 15, 18, 37, 44, 81
Mary of Guise, 3, 4, 5, 12, 16; visit to France, 24, 25; return to Scotland, 27; appointed Regent, 33; conference with rebel lords, 64; death, 64, 65
Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, 1; birth, 3; baptism, 6; removal to Stirling, 10; coronation, 11; proposed marriage to Edward VI., 14; at Inchmahome, 15; betrothed to the Dauphin Francis, 16; departure from Dunbarton for France, 17; arrival in France, 18; incident at Morlaix, 20; meeting with Francis, 22; attempt to poison, 26; her studies in France, 28; life at the French Court, 31; letter to her mother, 34; proposed marriage with Francis, 35; marriage settlements proposed, 38,

40; the secret treaty with France, 41; betrothed to Francis, 42, 43; the bridal, 44; honeymoon, 49; her claim to English crown, 53, 56; Queen of France, 59; at coronation of Francis, 62; suffers from smallpox, 63; her death expected, 63; death of Mary's mother, 65; illness of Mary, 65; death of Francis II., 67; proposed return of Mary to Scotland, 69; suitors for her hand, 70; farewell to France, 71; refused passport by Elizabeth, 73; determines to sail for Scotland without one, 75; embarks at Calais, 80; farewell to France, 84; arrives at Leith, 87; at Holyrood, 88; attends Mass at Holyrood Chapel, 91; interview with Knox, 92; a Scottish welcome, 93; procession through Edinburgh, 94; her royal tour, 95; restrains Edinburgh Town Council, 96; meets Riccio, 98; makes him Secretary, 100; marriages proposed, 104; first meeting with Darnley, 105; Elizabeth proposes Leicester as Mary's husband, 107; secret betrothal to Darnley, 108; expedition to Aberdeen, 109; Battle of Corrichie, 110; meets Darnley at Wemyss, 111; at Stirling, 113; secret marriage to Darnley, 114, 116, 118; Moray plots to seize Mary and Darnley, 118; public marriage to Darnley, 119; expedition against rebel lords, 123; recalls Bothwell, 126; matrimonial squabbles, 127; murder of Riccio, 133-138; Moray visits Mary, 140; escape from Holyrood, 141; flees to Dunbar, 141; expected confinement, 143; birth of James VI., 144; visits Bothwell at Hermitage, 146; at Jedburgh, 146; matrimonial disputes, 147; at Craigmillar Castle, 147; proposal to divorce Darnley, 149; return to Edinburgh, 151; baptism of James VI., 151; Casket Letters, 152; at Kirk o' Field, 154-157; death of Darnley, 157; Elizabeth's letter to, 161; proposed marriage to Bothwell, 163; carried off by Bothwell, 164; at Dunbar, 165; married to Bothwell, 167; at Carberry Hill, 169; carried captive to Edinburgh, 170; taken to Lochleven, 171; forced to sign abdication, 174; Moray visits her at Lochleven, 175; attempted escape, 176; escape from Lochleven, 178; at Hamilton Palace, 180; renounces her abdication, 181; her jewels confiscated and sold, 181;

Battle of Langside, 184; flight to Dundrennan Abbey, 189; appeal to Elizabeth, 189; the fatal ring, 190; letter to Elizabeth, 191; sails to England, 192; at Cockermouth Hall and Carlisle, 193; a prisoner, 194; Conference at York, 197; at Westminster, 199; various prisons, 203; Babington Conspiracy, 207; execution, 212-216; tomb, 217
Melville, Sir James, 167
— Sir Robert, 173, 180, 190
Montgomerie, Count of, 57
Montrose, Earl of, 14
Moray, Earl of, the Regent, 6, 32, 37, 51, 54, 72, 77, 78, 79, 87, 91, 95, 97, 98, 103, 104, 111, 112, 115, 116, 118, 123, 124, 126, 128, 129, 131, 139, 141, 142, 144, 145, 148, 149, 150, 155, 160, 162, 170, 171, 174, 175, 180, 181, 182, 183, 193, 197, 201
Moretta, Conte di, Ambassador of Savoy, 99, 100, 156
Morlaix, town of, 19, 20, 21
Morton, Earl of, 79, 97, 131, 132, 141, 142, 151, 160, 163, 164, 169, 170, 207

N

Navarre, Henri of, 43, 47
Nelson, Thomas, 157
Niddry, West, Castle of, 179
Norfolk, Duke of, 197, 199, 202
Northumberland, Earl of, 192, 202
Notre Dame de Paris, 48

O

Ogilvy, Lord, 164

P

Paiges, Sebastian, 156
Panter, David, Bishop of Ross, 37
Paran-well, near Kinross, 118
Paulet, Sir Amyas, 209, 210, 211, 213
Peterborough, Dean of, 214, 216
Philip II. of Spain, 35, 36, 52, 54, 55, 104, 206
Pinkie-cleugh, Battle of, 14

Q

Querlon, Meusnier de, poet, 83

R

Randolph, Thomas, English Ambassador, 79, 116, 127, 131, 160
Reid, Robert, Bishop of Orkney, 37, 50

Rheims, Cathedral of, 62, 71
Riccio, David, 98; his early history, 99; made Groom of the Chamber and Secretary, 100; aids Darnley to secret marriage with Mary, 112, 113; at Stirling, 113; suspected by the nobles, 130; plot to murder, 131; murder of Riccio, 133-135, 151
— Joseph, brother of David, 144
Robert II., 1
Robert III., 1
Robsart, Amy, 107
Rohan, Count de, 20
Rose, D. Murray, 78
Rothes, Earl of, 37, 50, 124, 181
"Runabout Raid," 124
Ruthven, Lord, 131, 132, 133, 136, 137, 141, 142, 170, 171

S

St Andrews, 95
Sadleir, Sir Ralph, English Ambassador, 7
Scot, Alexander, the poet, 101
Scottish Historical Review, 78
Seton Castle, 160
Seton, Lord, 37, 141, 177, 179
Sheffield, 203
Shrewsbury, Earl of, 203, 212, 215
Sinclair, Janet, nurse of Queen Mary, 6, 7, 24
Sinclair, Thomas, Keeper of Great Seal, 174
Southwell, Robert, the poet, 217
Standon, Sir William, Master of Horse, 141
Stirling Castle, 9, 10, 14, 95, 113, 164
Stuart, Sir James, of Doune, 76
— Lord Robert, Mary's half-brother, 133, 155
— Robert, the poisoner, 26
Sutherland, Earl of, 164

T

Taylor, William, Darnley's servant, 157
Temple-Newsam, Darnley's birthplace, 105
Terreagles, 189
Throckmorton, Nicholas, English Ambassador, 70, 72, 74, 75, 76, 172, 173, 181
Tixhall, 203
Tournelles, Palace of, 48, 56, 58
Treaty of Edinburgh, 71
Tudor, Margaret, wife of James IV., 8, 46, 52, 105
Tudor, Mary, Queen of England, 36, 52, 53, 73
Tutbury Castle, 194, 202, 203

V

Villers-Côterèts, 49, 62

W

Walsingham, Lord, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211
Westminster, Conference at, 199
Westminster, Mary's tomb at, 217
Westmoreland, Earl of, 202
Wingfield, 203, 207
Workington, 192

Y

York, Cardinal Duke of, 2
York, Conference at, 196, 197

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